dissent

Summer 1974 $1.75

Workers (Female) Arise!
Patricia Cayo Sexton

Nixon: Melting Down the Plastic Man
Irving Howe

The Gramsci Myth
Henry Pachter

The Coming Crisis in Yugoslavia
Mihajlo Mihajlov

Detroit in the '30s
Frank Marquart

On Freedom –and Freedoms
Leszek Kolakowski

The Welfare State and Socialism
Erazim Kohák

Al Shanker and I
David Selden

A Samizdat Story
Varlam Shalamov

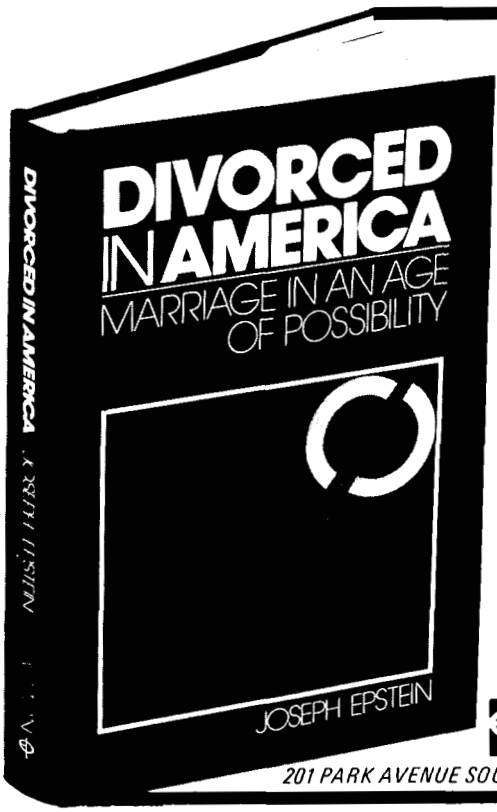
Why Allende Fell
François Bourricaud

Can the Corporation Be Made "Responsible"?
Gus Tyler

Ho & the Americans
Joseph Buttinger

Notes on Détente
Joseph Clark

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Marriage and divorce among the middle class

What is it like to go through a divorce? To break the news to children, family and friends? To become a weekend parent, or deal with loneliness and a sense of failure? To face your first sexual encounter as a single person? *Divorced in America* defines both the personal crisis and social institution of divorce, and the bewilderingly complex emotions that surround it.

"Joseph Epstein has written a lucid, humane, intelligent and utterly honest book. It is about marriage, divorce, breakup, and starting again: the way we live now. It shines with truth. It is written with delicacy of feeling. I read it with admiration, some sadness, some hope. It is a fine book." –IRVING HOWE

DIVORCED IN AMERICA
Marriage in an Age of Possibility
by JOSEPH EPSTEIN

dutton

201 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003

$8.95 at booksellers

DISSENT, issued July 1, 1974, is published quarterly, spring, summer, fall, and winter, by the DISSENT Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 100017. Subscriptions: $8.00 for one year; $14.00 for two years; $5.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $1.00 for mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, $2.00. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 155 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

© 1974 by the DISSENT Publishing Corporation. Permission to reprint any article must be obtained from the publishers. • Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. • Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. • Volume XXI, Number 3, (whole No. 96).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

KATYA GILDEN, author of two novels, *Between the Hills and the Sea* (1971) and *Hurry Sundown* (1965), is at work on a new book.

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI, the eminent Polish philosopher, teaches at Oxford University in England. Among his works, available in English, are *Toward a Marxist Humanism* (1968), *The Alienation of Reason: A History of Positive Thought* (1968), and *Marxism and Beyond* (1969). His essay in this issue is translated, with permission, from the German version, which appeared in the journal *Merkur,* August 1972.

FRANK MARQUART, now retired, lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he writes his memoirs and does volunteer work for the Boycott Committee of the United Farm Workers.

MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV, the well-known Yugoslav writer, lives in his homeland, where his work has not been published for some time. This report is reprinted, with permission, from the English magazine *Index*, published at 35 Bow Street, London, W.C.2.

RICHARD ROBBINS, who teaches sociology at the University of Massachusetts–Boston, is at work on a biography of the sociologist Charles S. Johnson.

GUS TYLER is assistant president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Mr. Tyler writes a nationally syndicated column and is the author of *Labor in the Metropolis* (1972), *The Political Imperative: The Corporate Character of Unions* (1968), and *The Labor Revolution* (1967). His article is reprinted, with permission and in slightly abbreviated form, from the *Montclair Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities,* Summer 1973.

Conjunctions and Disjunctions by Octavio Paz

TRANSLATED BY HELEN R. LANE,
Winner of the 1974 National Book Award for translation

A RICHARD SEAVER BOOK
$7.95

One of the major poets and thinkers of our time examines the human condition and comes up with a fascinating and provocative exploration of man's duality. He speaks of what joins together and what separates. Of things analogous and opposite. Of the union and disunion of two signs: "body" and "non-body." Of violence and rebellion. Of materialism, capitalism and communism. Of science and technology.

"Illuminating....A fine companion volume to other works by Paz."
—*Library Journal*

THE VIKING PRESS
625 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is America moving to the right?

THE NEW CONSERVATIVES:

A Critique From The Left

Edited by Lewis A. Coser, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and author of *The Functions of Social Conflict*, and Irving Howe, editor of *Dissent* magazine.

Was the radicalism of the 1960's merely a temporary turn away from the path to the right? Is America becoming more and more conservative? And what about these new conservatives of the 70's . . . how does their philosophy differ from traditional conservatism?

These are some of the questions explored in 16 provocative essays that present a 1970's perspective on democratic radical thinking. The contributors include Joseph Epstein writing on "Intellectuals in Retreat," Robert Lekachman on "The Conservative Drift Among Economists," Gus Tyler on "The Politics of Pat Moynihan," Michael Walzer on "In Defense of Equality," Hanna Fenichel Pitkin on "The Roots of Conservative Thought," Murray Hausknecht on "Caliban's Abode," Michael Harrington on "The Welfare State and the Neo-Conservatives," Bernard Rosenberg and Irving Howe on "Are the Jews Turning to the Right?" and Mark Kelman on "The Social Cost of Inequality."

As Lewis A. Coser observes in his introduction: "Most of the essays in this volume are addressed to the current vogue of American neoconservatism. These new conservatives do not give the impression of having reflected in a sustained and systematic manner on political philosophy. They express a mood and a fashion rather than a deeply felt political stance. They seem to be sustained by a desire to seize the shifting Zeitgeist by its tail, and they batten on the mood of disillusionment that has seized the country after the hopes of the early 1960's. They wish to bring about a counterrevolution of declining expectations.

THE NEW CONSERVATIVES . . . an incisive critical dissection of the trend to conservative thinking. $9.95 at bookstores, or use the coupon.

Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co. NYT
Dept. 915, 10 E. 53 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10022

Please send ____ copies of *The New Conservatives* at $9.95 each. If I find the book unsuitable for any reason, I may return this order within 10 days and owe nothing. Otherwise you will bill me at $9.95 plus shipping.

☐ SAVE. Check box and enclose $9.95 per copy. Publisher then pays shipping.

☐ CHARGE MY MASTERCHARGE

☐ 4-Digit Interbank _____ Exp. Date ..... (Publisher will pay shipping.)

Please bill me direct including a late payment charge for shipping.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ST. ____ ZIP _____

SIGNATURE _____

N.Y. and Ill. residents add applicable sales tax.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISSENT is a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

dissent

SUMMER 1974

EDITOR: Irving Howe

MANAGING EDITOR:
Edith Tarcov

EDITORIAL BOARD:
Jervis Anderson, Joseph Buttinger, David Bensman, David Bromwich, Joseph Clark, Emanuel Geltman, Lewis Coser, Rose Laub Coser, Michael Harrington, Robert Heilbroner, Murray Hausknecht, Erazim Kohák, Jeremy Larner, Robert Lekachman, Norman Mailer, Deborah Meier, Henry Pachter, Martin Peretz, Stanley Plastrik, Jack Rader, Bernard Rosenberg, Meyer Schapiro, Brendan Sexton, Patricia Cayo Sexton, David Spitz, Michael Walzer, Dennis H. Wrong

ART DIRECTION:
Burton Wenk

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

365 MELTING DOWN THE PLASTIC MAN *by Irving Howe*

367 THE SHAH OF IRAN, IS HE A MARXIST? *by Henry Pachter*

370 YUGOSLAVIA—THE APPROACHING STORM *by Mihajlo Mihajlov*

372 MANIACS AND MURDER *by I.H.*

ARTICLES

374 FREEDOM AND FREEDOMS *by Leszek Kolakowski*

380 WORKERS (FEMALE) ARISE! *by Patricia Cayo Sexton*

396 AL SHANKER AND I *by David Selden*

402 CHILE: WHY ALLENDE FELL *by François Bourricaud*

415 LEND-LEASE COMES TO A SOVIET CAMP: A SAMIZDAT STORY *by Varlam Shalamov*

421 FROM A LABOR JOURNAL *by Frank Marquart*

431 ON LIMITS OF "CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY" *by Gus Tyler*

NOTEBOOK

440 SOCIALISM & THE WELFARE STATE *by Erazim Kohák*

443 DÉTENTE—SHADOW OR SUBSTANCE? *by Joseph Clark*

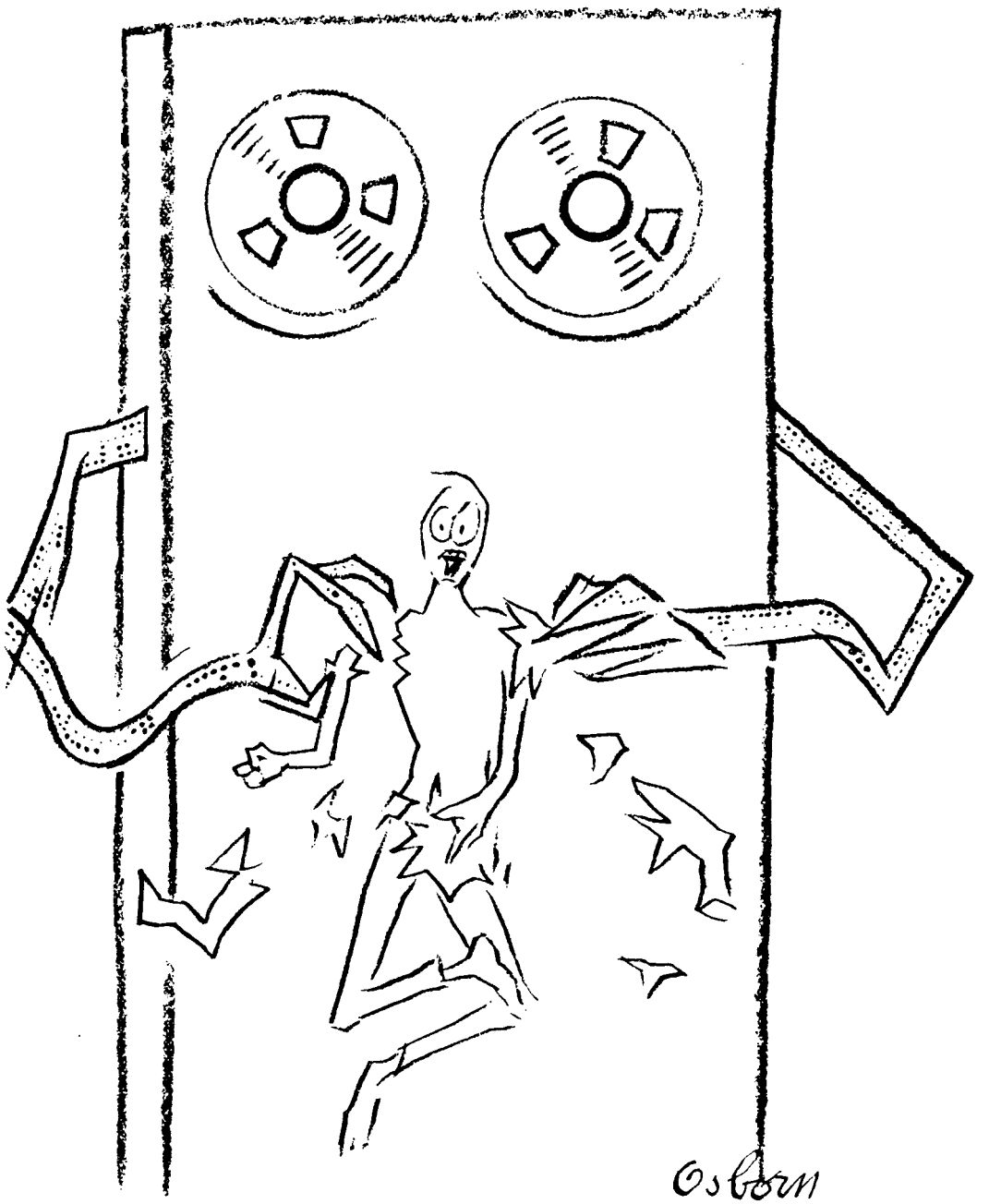
BOOKS

447 REVIEWS *by Henry Pachter, Joseph Buttinger, Katya Gilden, and Richard Robbins*

461 LETTERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE WORLD OF TAPES



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Irving Howe

Melting Down the Plastic Man

We should have known that when definitive word came to be spoken about Richard Nixon, it would be from the pen of Art Buchwald. In one of his recent skits Buchwald shows "a former White House aide" called "Deep Toes," offering a sensational news bit in "an abandoned garage in Chevy Chase." What "Deep Toes" reveals is that there was never a difference between the Old Nixon and the New Nixon.

The New Nixon whom we saw from 1969 to 1971 "was the Old Nixon with makeup on. We dyed his hair, powdered his cheeks and put him in new suits. We had everybody fooled."

Whose idea was it to put out the story that there was a New Nixon?

"Chuck Colson and John Dean," continues Deep Toes, "cooked it up between them. They figured if they were going to resort to a lot of dirty stuff in Nixon's second term, it would be better to do it in the name of the New Nixon rather than the Old Nixon. You see people would have been very wary if they thought the Old Nixon was running for office."

Keen words, "Deep Toes." But keen as they are, they hardly tell us anything that, say, Helen Gahagan Douglas couldn't have told us all along, since Nixon defeated her for Congress in a dirty California election. Nor did it take library research to know what Richard Nixon had always been, to remember his complicity with McCarthyism and his natural affinity for the most benighted and vulgar politics. It only took a willingness to remember.

That is why there's more than a drop of hypocrisy in the sudden outpouring of "moral revulsion" that followed the release of the transcripts. Does anyone propose to tell us that Senator Hugh Scott didn't really know what Nixon was? And for that matter, the distinguished intellectuals who just before the last election came out with a full-page ad in the *New York Times* supporting Nixon on the ground that he was "prudent"—they too were old enough to have witnessed the early rise of Richard Nixon.

HE WAS MADE OF PLASTIC, and under the heat of revelation, it melted away. There is a point of view—far from adequate to the complexities of our politics, but not to be dismissed either—which sees the whole political process as little more than a public-relations stunt, an elaborate concoction of a pseudo-personality by skilled operators who try to gauge which sociopsychic needs are strongest at a given moment and then proceed to manufacture a candidate to satisfy them. For this reductive view of things, Richard Nixon is the best argument. If ever a candidate was manufactured, it was Nixon. The deep unreality reflective people have felt about him, the sense that there was *no one there* but a puffy concoction, may indeed be the basis for his success. Nixon had been put together to appeal to everything inauthentic in American life, every wish to evade social realities and responsibilities, every impulse to find ways of scuttling and sabotaging the welfare state without being explicit about it, and every stubborn residue of a mindless anti-Communism that could be tapped with a few phrases.

It was a neat composition while it lasted, and its manufacturers can hardly be blamed that it didn't last. Once the composition melted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

away, what remained of the public Richard Nixon was . . . pretty much the private Richard Nixon, Uriah Heep as ex-Quaker, scared, nasty petty-bourgeois, visibly pulling himself together for another public appearance, full of resentments and inferiorities masked by rhetoric about The Presidency, a cheap little man who had surrounded himself with thugs and squealed that, really, he was not a crook. Even that no longer seems certain.

What appalled the country, I think, was not merely the dirty work revealed by the tapes, since that had been visible earlier. What appalled the country was the recognition that the president of the most powerful nation on earth was . . . well, so small, so petty, so inconsequent, so very much like the local grifter trying to figure out a way to chisel around the law. By comparison, Warren G. Harding had a certain magnitude, like a toy duck blown up with air—and in any case, had a passion for women, at least a recognizable human trait. But seeing the shriveled reality of Nixon was a blow to national pride.

HE CANNOT LEAVE OFFICE a moment too soon. It hardly matters how he goes, resignation or impeachment, but go he must. Insofar as he was, in part, aping the manners and morals of corporation executives, Nixon had a certain representativeness to him: that's what a politician can usually be expected to do in capitalist society. But insofar as one still takes seriously the American claim to democracy—and we do—then he must be dismissed, one way or another, as beyond the pale.

That being so, the conduct of the Democratic party leaders these days is pretty astonishing, indeed, disgusting. After Republican leaders started issuing their "moral revulsion" statements about the transcripts, such worthies as Senator Robert Byrd, the Democratic whip, and Robert Strauss, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, made cooing sounds to calm down "the hysteria." As the *New Yorker* nicely put it: "The Democratic Party has, of all things, made a show of interposing itself between a besieged Republican President and the supposedly hysterical members of his own party. . . . There is even the implication that the Democrats are perhaps saving us from President Nixon's own possible impulse to resign. . . ."

Behind this seeming timidity there is a cynical strategy that could easily backfire (one almost hopes it will). The calculation of the Democratic leaders seems to be that if only they can maintain Nixon in office, drag out impeachment proceedings, and keep the headlines bubbling with new revelations, they will have an easy victory in 1976. For all they'll have to do then is to keep repeating "Watergate," and put up noble blockheads for every office in the country without so much as worrying about social or economic programs. To the Byrds and the Strausses, as well as other Democratic leaders, this seems an attractive prospect.

If, however, Gerald Ford becomes president and the Watergate clamor dies down, the Democrats might have to come up with an idea or two, something resembling a program. And with candidates who take stands, probably liberal ones against Ford's conservative bias. That doesn't seem to the "pros" nearly so attractive a prospect as running against Watergate.

From our point of view, however, it is very much to be desired. The resignation or impeachment of Nixon need not put an end to Watergate revelations, prosecutions, etc., nor remove the Watergate issue from the center of political debate. But it would make unlikely a simple or simple-minded campaign against Nixon; it would require that issues be touched upon, if not fully confronted; it might even, heaven help us, force upon Democratic contenders some thought.

That is why the tendency of the Democratic leaders to form a kind of tacit united front with Nixon against the idea of resignation and for the alternative of impeachment ought to be resisted by whatever liberal forces remain in Washington. If, to be sure, that does not happen, then impeachment will be necessary. But it will be a special responsibility of the liberal-left to make sure that the coming political struggles go deeper than the melting away of the plastic man who was elected to the presidency of the United States. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Henry Pachter

The Shah of Iran, Is He a Marxist?

At the press conference in Tehran—while solemnly announcing the raise of posted oil prices to $11.6 a barrel and the government take (correctly called royalty because it is the king who receives it) to $7—Shah Mohammed of Iran said:

> We must base this matter on a new concept. We must compare the price of oil to the price of other sources of energy. . . . The price should be the minimum you would have to pay for the extraction of shale, the liquefication of coal. How much it costs to exploit these other sources of energy should be the basis for the price of oil.

His Highness, most likely, has never read the third volume of *Das Kapital;* but his words could have been taken verbatim from this source, in which Marx explains the workings of ground rent and monopoly prices. Whenever there is a limited supply of some resource, for instance of land, Marx explains, the price of the product will rise high enough for the least efficient producer to make a profit. Producers on more fertile land or producers using more efficient machinery will pocket the difference between their own low production cost and the high production cost of the marginal producer. They may, however, not be able to keep it because the owner of the land will force them to yield it in the form of rent. The same goes for mines and, though Marx wrote before their existence, also for oil wells.

It is as simple as that. If it costs $7 to liquefy coal, the $3 price for oil we have been enjoying so long is unrealistic from the viewpoint of the royal monopolist. Shah Mohammed, King Faisal, and the other oil potentates could reason that in not getting this royalty they were being cheated and (pardon the expression) exploited like proletarians. They can charge that the oil-consuming countries have been living off them too long, and they now could resolve that this would no longer be so. At the recent U.N. Special Assembly on Raw Materials, the excolonial countries have even asked for "reparations" in the amount of all customs duties and taxes that have been levied on imported oil over the years. In Europe, where the gasoline tax is heavy, this might mean the surrender of all the highways built with this revenue. If the world is governed by monopoly capitalists, then it is better to be a monopoly capitalist than a sucker.

Until recently, Western consumers benefited from competition among the producers. Now this has changed, and all the oil producers needed to do was to create their own monopoly, the cartel that now is known as OPEC—the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The oil corporations now have created their Frankenstein monster.

The sheikhs are sitting on top of valuable merchandise. For a long time they have stood in awe of the clever foreigner who knew how to extract this liquid from their soil. They continued to accumulate riches, and at least some of them even let their subjects share in the bonanza—to some extent.

But they still did not use this new wealth in a capitalistic way, to pump it back into their own economy, to let industry grow and provide Bedouins with jobs. Still, who needs jobs if the foreigners provide comfort in the form of royalties? These are civilized, feudal societies whose people have not been spoiled by any Western standards of worthiness through achievement. Their only problem has been what to do with their wealth.

At first, they invested in the London stock market, where another magic mechanism seemed to provide them with dividends and capital gains, again without putting in any work of their own. When the market sagged, the kings had second thoughts: why let the Westerners take out all that oil if its value can only increase in the ground? Let the West and Japan work themselves into a frenzy, consuming ever more and more oil, thereby making themselves more and more dependent on new supplies and thereby increasing the value of what was left.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Clever! By every definition of the word, we now have imperialism in reverse: the exploitation of the West by Arab and other monopolists. They even have gone the Western imperialists one better: they exploit their economic monopoly for political purposes. The old imperialists usually operated the other way around: using political influence and military superiority to acquire wealth and secure for themselves the natural resources of the earth. In all their bloody history the Western imperialists never have accumulated riches at a rate anywhere near the oil sheikhs' accumulation of wealth. It has been estimated that they own something like $80 billion in stocks, bonds, and currency abroad, and that their yearly income will rise from $17 billion last year to $60 billion in years to come. They are about to invest money in the distribution of oil products; they will have their own tankers, refineries, storage facilities, and gasoline stations in the West. They may also invest in other branches of industry, and the big corporations, anxious to be on the side of the mighty, have made them interesting offers of partnership.

But this economic empire pales by the side of the political muscle that the monopoly of oil confers on those who know how to use it. We have seen demonstrations of this power in the recent Middle East crisis. But some saw it coming when more and more sophisticated weapons were delivered to Bedouin armies, which could hardly use them properly—but are learning fast or, as the weapons grow more sophisticated and idiot-proof, no longer have to acquire high technical skills to use them. Are we going to be dominated by the sheikhs in the end?

NO, IT WILL NOT be the sheikhs who will rule the world. It will be terrorists and gangsters, blackmailers and irregular armies. The sheikhs tremble for their thrones and dare not defy the orders of terrorists. So the sheikhs increase the price for oil to unreasonable heights, not because they have any illusions about the workability of the new monopoly system, but because they think that this defiance of the West will be accepted, by the terrorists whom they fear, as a patriotic move in the war of liberation.

At the U.N. Special Assembly, consequently, we heard a lot about sovereignty, rights and ownership, but very little about the needy millions in the least developed and endowed countries, who are the real victims of the general price increase. Neither the oil, copper, and bauxite countries nor the Soviet bloc were prepared to admit any obligation, and an American proposal to create a fund for emergency aid was not even placed on the agenda. The representatives of Iran and of Algeria were vying for the leadership in pulling together a united front of claimant countries and pushing through the most sweeping resolutions, which have only one drawback—they cannot be implemented and therefore will diminish the prestige of the United Nations. By leading one revolution, the governments of some countries apparently were trying to ward off another.

Here, I think, they are mistaken, and the Western nations who think it is better to deal with the sheikhs than with gangsters are mistaken, too. Let the sheikhs defy their own gangsters, let their thrones crumble, let the gangsters rule in the Arab countries and ruin them. What have the Ba'ath regimes done for Iraq and Syria? They cannot eat or drink the oil; they need current income. Nor can they sell their stock without depressing the market that measures their wealth. Anyway, if and when the rulers have to flee to the West, their wealth will be immunized. They may join the Bao Dai and the fat Fuad in some Riviera resort. Meanwhile, their successors would have to take care of the Palestinian refugees and deal with their minorities—Druses and Christian Kopts, Kurds and black Sudanese, Berbers and others. Those who claim the power must assume the responsibility. If the sheikhs wish to join the gangsters, or think that this is the only way to save their thrones, they should look out for the consequences themselves. St. John Philby has reported that king Ibn Saud said to him on his death bed: "A man's riches and his children are his enemies." Maybe this will prove as true of the new imperialists as of the old ones.

There is another reason why the new empires may not last even as long as the empires of Western capitalism. They do not develop any new forces of production. They are purely parasitical and rest on ownership rather than function. They command no secret that could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make their power superior to that of others. They only invite envy. Historically they are born dead. The recent surge of nationalism, the expropriations and so-called nationalizations, the establishment of independent political units, the formation of cartels for the exploitation of the consuming countries—all this some see as the new revolt of the masses, the insurrection of the world's poor and disinherited against dependence. To some extent this is so. But just as the Great Revolution of the Sansculottes did not bring to power the third estate as a whole but only the bourgeoisie, so the national revolutions of our time have brought to power not those who are hungry and destitute but their managers and functionaries, Djilas's "new class."

The revolution has not given the resources of the earth to the peoples of all countries but only to the managers who are able to identify their own position with the cause of a nation, especially the nation on whose soil the facilities happen to be located. These owner-nationalists, whose power is based on territorial sovereignty, now are locked in a bitter fight against the multinational corporations whose power is not tied to any particular nation. It is a repetition, of sorts, of the old rivalry between conservative protectionist landowners and cosmopolitan laissez-faire traders and industrialists. One need not decide which of these two forms of exploitation is more and which less moral; they are both parasitical, neither is creative. The nationalist form may actually develop some forces of production in underdeveloped countries where the economy still has to "catch up" with the more advanced types of industrialism. The cosmopolitan form may, thanks to its size and its all-embracing organization, actually promote technological advances in its subordinate units. But neither is productive except in its own area of activity—the refinement of codes of ownership and the development of management techniques permitting the growth of the organization without necessarily contributing to the growth of production, or to the improving of goods and services that fill genuine consumer needs.

The Special Assembly also saw the nauseating spectacle of the Western governments fighting, not to protect the interests of their consumer populations but the Transnational Corporations, actually yielding on important points of international organization in return for the deletion, in the final resolution, of a clause that would have placed expropriation under the exclusive jurisdiction of the expropriating country. Since the transnational corporations have become a symbol of neocolonial domination, it would be better to nationalize them in all countries. Only then would it be possible to negotiate about the establishment of true international agencies for the management and distribution of the world's resources in the interests of all nations.

Socialists, however, cannot be satisfied with nationalization and with international raw-materials cartels. There was a time when such measures looked like a help either to the well-being or to the ego of some new countries. This is no longer the case. Underdeveloped countries buy weapons, build nuclear bombs, and use economic monopolies for political purposes. Whether state-owned or private, their new organizations are essentially capitalistic.

I believe it is inevitable that these big organizations will both fight each other and cooperate with each other; and hence we shall have stagnation, monopoly, cartelization, distribution of the advantages of the system among those who are in, and new bars against those who are out. This will lead to a system of

Announcing—

A Special Fall Issue:

ON THE NEW AMERICAN SITUATION

Contributors:

Michael Harrington
John Herling
Robert Lekachman
Herman P. Miller
Gus Tyler
Daniel Yankelovich

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"postindustrial feudalism" where most of the consumers' needs are being filled but actual power is in the hands of the national and international managers. We shall have Rudolf Hilferding's *General Kartell* in a consumer culture but without the charms of his 19th-century heritage. The new imperialism is no longer economic; it is political and nationalist. It increases the danger of war every day. □

Mihajlo Mihajlov

Yugoslavia—The Approaching Storm

While East-West tension is subsiding throughout Europe (to a considerable extent the result of Chinese pressure on the U.S.S.R.) and the likelihood of military conflict is decreasing steadily, somber storm clouds are gathering more swiftly with each passing day over a country that many people have rightly regarded as a model for the possible future democratization of totalitarian Communist states, a test tube in which one hoped would engender the union of Eastern and Western Europe—Yugoslavia.

There must obviously be some historical logic in this paradoxical course of social and political development in a country that a quarter of a century ago broke free of Stalin's sphere of domination, embarked on the road of gradual democratization, and became the initiator of the policy of "peaceful coexistence" now so popular on our planet.

What is happening in Yugoslavia, and, more important, why? Let us attempt to answer this question.

Because of the introduction of "self-government" into the economic and cultural fields, the gradual liberalization of the country, inspired in the first instance by its alienation from the U.S.S.R., began to gather momentum and took a progressively firmer hold, particularly after the disbandment of the security service in 1966. But the one-party monopoly continued, and in those conditions the liberalization of a dictatorship in a multinational country could lead only to one thing—the formation of separate, national Communist parties, which inevitably fanned the flames of dissension between the different peoples, a Balkan disease from time immemorial, and threatened to jeopardize the very existence of the state as an entity.

The danger was all the greater because the national Communist parties were no less intolerant of opposition of any kind in their own republics than had earlier been the single Communist party of Yugoslavia, and nothing could have prevented the possible splitting up of the country.

There was only one realistic way out of the situation that had arisen: the democratization of social and political life, opening the way to democratic forces which would easily have been able to safe-guard the unity of the country. But this would have meant liquidating the party monopoly, something the leadership could not bring itself to do.

A different course of action was chosen: the dispersal of party leaders and many thousands of activists in the national Communist parties, and the full reconstitution of a single Yugoslav party; the elimination of liberalism in all spheres of life under the banner of the struggle for self-government; the remonopolization by party members of all the levers of power; and the universal inculcation of Marxism which supplied the ideological basis for the dictatorship of the "proletariat."

But is such a thing possible in our times? Describing Louis Bonaparte's accession to power in France in the mid-19th century, Marx observed wittily that if all historical events repeat themselves, the first occasion is sublime tragedy and the second a farce. Marx was wrong in many respects, but what is happening in Yugoslavia today would seem to illustrate this particular thought.

Though there was widespread and bloody resistance, the process of setting up a Com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munist dictatorship in Yugoslavia after the Second World War was nevertheless successfully carried out, and but for the conflict with Stalin, Yugoslavia would not now be very different from Bulgaria or Hungary. Today, however, Yugoslavia lacks the most important and decisive prerequisite for the reintroduction of an absolute totalitarian party monopoly, and that is, a fanatical and disciplined party.

During recent decades and especially over the last two years, both the so-called liberals and the bureaucrats, the nationalists and the technocrats, in fact, all those who have at any time shown a certain degree of independence and vitality, have been purged from the party, and new recruitment has been made from a working-class environment. But these are people remote from any fanaticism, who inevitably gravitate in the direction of the very "liberals" who were previously purged.

The years of relative freedom, when there was an almost independent press and when all the contemporary Western thinkers, writers, and sociologists were translated, have had their effect. So too has the fact that a million Yugoslav workers (one quarter of all the workers in the country) live in Western Europe and can see the advantages of the democratic system. Interminable speeches on the introduction of a party dictatorship in the interest of workers' self-government, in view of the economic crisis and the agricultural impasse, no longer arouse anybody's enthusiasm. The only reaction of the intelligentsia to the reestablishment of party committees with the intention of preserving Marxist ideological purity in literature, theater, cinema, music, and art, is a contemptuous smile.

A campaign against religious influences has been initiated, a compulsory two-year course in Marxism was introduced into institutes of higher education, and there are calls for the dismissal of some very distinguished university professors connected with the journal *Praxis*—professors who are the "last of the Mohicans" of Marxist thought—as opposed to party dogmatism—in the Communist world. It is clear to everybody, of course, that this persecution has nothing to do with Marxism; it is part of the fight against all manifestations of dissidence.

The press, now under very heavy pressure from the party, daily publishes reports of party meetings at which the courts and the police are called upon to apply "revolutionary" and not "formal" legality in the struggle against the "class enemy." However, judges do not seem particularly keen to take this advice, for two reasons: first, no one is sure that the new totalitarianization will succeed or that he will not be required at some future time to account for his violation of "formal" legality; and second, no opposition class has physically existed in Yugoslavia for a quarter of a century now, unless one counts the permanent party oligarchy termed by Djilas the "new class."

Of course, paragraphs 146 and 147 of the new, fifth postwar Constitution, which aims to consolidate the new "revolutionary course," guarantee freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and of political organizations. But, unfortunately, these freedoms have so far remained mere words on paper as they did in the corresponding paragraphs (39 and 40) of the old Constitution. Now, however, parliamentary deputies are to be replaced by deputies who have no immunity, are elected "at factory floor level" (this in conditions of a total party monopoly), and can be promptly relieved if they make any attempt to act independently, something that was rather difficult to do to the [old] deputies and has caused the party a great deal of trouble over the last few years.

Occasionally the fight against dissidence of any kind adopts sheer Stalinist tactics and the same old formulas begin to reappear: not to be a Marxist is synonymous with betrayal of the fatherland and participation in a "special war of espionage" directed against Yugoslavia. Activities for which the Pulitzer Prize is awarded in the United States are referred to as "ideological sabotage" and political crime.

DISREGARDING the high-flown, monotonous incantations of the party, one can truthfully say that an ominous quiet has fallen on Yugoslav society. A stillness before the storm.

An unexpected and certainly a positive result of all this, though it has come about in a negative way, is that, for the first time in several decades, the democratic opposition forces of all the Yugoslav peoples are reaching a state of total psychological unity. The envy with which Yugoslav citizens read about the restora-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion of lawful political democracy in Argentina, their realization that social contradictions cannot be resolved within the one-party framework, and the popularity of the idea of a second socialist party have obliged the regime to end its many years of deliberate silence on the subject of Djilas, the leading exponent of this idea, and to embark on the publication of a series of articles purporting to show the bourgeois, capitalist origin of the very idea of political democracy in socialist society.

But now it seems the fateful time has come when everything the regime does has the opposite effect, and the moment is clearly drawing nearer when some perhaps accidental stimulus will spark off the storm and the ominous silence will be broken by a crack of thunder. Because of the geopolitical situation of Yugoslavia the storm will scarcely remain an isolated outbreak; and who knows how it might end? The thought is not a cheering one.

The approaching crisis has so far been staved off by the hope (fading daily) that the ruler of Yugoslavia, who has so often in the past and so skillfully managed to avert disaster, will on this occasion, too, change the direction of a domestic policy that constitutes an extremely serious threat to peace in Europe. The likelihood of this happening, though, is very small, because of the general certainty that the only solution is to democratize the country, which would mean restoring the political rights of citizens. Unfortunately, therefore, it is extremely improbable that the country will be democratized in the peaceful, evolutionary manner that seemed both desirable and possible only two years ago. It is equally improbable that the current attempt at a return to totalitarianism will succeed without outside help.

It is difficult to say how this will all end; but the paradox of this attempt at the radical re-Stalinization of a country that has for decades been the least totalitarian of all the Communist countries now becomes clear. Yugoslavia was the first country to reach the historic crossroads where she had the choice of two directions: either the transition to democratic, multiparty socialism, or the reversion to Stalinism. And sooner or later all the Communist countries will come to this crossroad. This is what makes the current Balkan crisis one of paramount significance. □

Maniacs and Murder

A little unexpectedly but not the less welcome, some sensible words on terrorism come in the May 1974 issue of *Ramparts*, the New Left monthly. A piece signed by "the Editors" details the ugly story of how some 20 people, mostly middle-class white women and declassed black men, decided—in the name of "the people," of course—to murder Marcus Foster, the black Oakland superintendent of schools. In the gibberish that now passes for "revolutionary" language, the Symbionese Liberation Army announced it would kill Foster for participating in "the implementation of Bio-Dossiers through the Forced Youth Identification Program." *Ramparts*, which ought to know, since it has plenty to answer for in earlier provocations of mindless leftism, admits that it hasn't the faintest idea of what "Bio-Dossiers" refer to. Still, the "people" having decided and assigned Field Marshall Cinque to the job, Foster was murdered.

"In whose name and on whose behalf did the SLA execute Foster? In what sense is their Court of the People, of *the people at all? Foster was given no chance to answer the charges, or plead his case."*

These points raised by *Ramparts* are well-taken, and one can only hope they have been read with some attention in California—though there are problems here *Ramparts* hasn't thought through. But before touching on those, we need only add that the outcome of the SLA affair has been entirely predictable: a ghastly shoot-out in which the brutal Los Angeles cops gave the half-dozen SLA people ten minutes in which to surrender and then mowed them down. As for the kidnapped Patricia Hearst, who may since have been promoted to Field Marshal herself, she may or may not be alive by the time this is read. Blood has been spilled, ugly passions were aroused, vicious sentiments reinforced: that is the total effect of the course undertaken by the SLA.

Proposing to analyze the SLA and similar phenomena, *Ramparts* argues that their

> acts of desperate violence are often conceived as protests against inaction itself, and vigilante

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> groups like the SLA see themselves as substitutes for the missing mass organizations. The very presence of a mass movement acts as a restraint on destructive violence, since it creates a moral community for people in revolt.

Well, there's a portion of truth in that, though I think it's time murderous gangs like SLA no longer be considered as merely "distorted" expressions of legitimate discontent but also as pathological phenomena which in many respects are not very different from fascism. But leave that aside, and turn to the question of "a mass movement." Perhaps it's true that "a mass movement" of the Left would act as a brake on SLA-type *kamikaze* gangs (though it seems not to have been true in Chile recently, and in Germany during the '20s it wasn't true, either). But even if we grant the *Ramparts* argument, all that it says is that under certain *conditions* SLA adventurism might not flourish; it is not yet giving a *reason* for opposing such methods, or it is not yet giving a reason that goes beyond the merely tactical or expedient (terrorism calls down the cops, it is counterproductive, etc.).

What is the ground for believing, after the torment and shambles of 20th-century history, that "a mass movement" would *necessarily* be superior in its moral character to a handful of desperadoes? *Ramparts* itself quotes "one former New Left activist" who asks the pertinent questions, "Do we really believe every Vietnamese village chief cut down by the NLF deserved to die? Have we such supreme faith in the Cuban government that we can state categorically its revolutionary firing squads were never aimed in the wrong direction?"

And all *Ramparts* can answer is that "the Cuban Government and the NLF are legitimized by mass movements numbering millions of supporters, by political organs, by legal codes which are enforced and respected . . . by courts of justice and judicial review procedures to which military functionaries are responsible. . . ." It is not a very strong answer, since, for one thing, the rightness or wrongness of NLF and Cuban executions, about which the "former New Left activists" asks, is in no way dependent on whether "millions" support the agencies undertaking those executions. And as for their "legitimacy," when, editors of *Ramparts* please tell us, was the last time the Cuban government submitted itself to a free election, so that the "millions" could express their judgment of its conduct?

The *Ramparts* editors have taken a significant step away from the arrogant elitism, the usurpation by gangs of declassed and deranged maniacs of the power of "the people," which has characterized the worst segment of the New Left. But Ramparts has not thought through the issue of the moral appropriateness of violence and/or terrorism in a democratic society. So long as *Ramparts* can be published, Bobby Seale run for mayor of Oakland, demonstrators cry freely that "the bum" should be thrown out of the White House, political movements of opposition organize and function—so long as we live in a democracy, and yes, an imperfect, debased, vulgarized, manipulated democracy, then, no private group, tiny or not-so-tiny, has the right to appoint itself prosecutor, judge, and executor of violence.

Ramparts is rightly appalled at the destructiveness and self-destructiveness of SLA, but finally the case against it and its half-shamed apologists cannot be made short of a principled defense of democracy.

The only group that seems to have emerged from the California mess with any honor or self-respect is Cesar Chavez's farm workers' union, which refused to participate in the "food distribution" program decreed by Patricia Hearst's kidnappers. It refused on the principled ground that it wanted no part of a program enforced through terrorism. As for the rest—

Damn all those mindless "theoreticians," the 30-day wonders who came up with such rock-headed notions as "liberal fascism," and thereby prepared the way for the Cinques! Damn any enraged witless "radical"—black or white, young or old, rich or poor—who dares pump bullets into another human being because of a delusionary doubling with "the people"! Damn the brutal cops waiting for a chance to kill the killers but not ready to wait a few hours in the hope they might surrender! Damn all these linked murderers and maniacs who debase politics and threaten freedom!

—I. H. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leszek Kolakowski

Freedom and Freedoms

CLAMORING FOR A FREEDOM THAT IS
petty-bourgeois, narrow, limited, merely phenomenal, rootless, superficial, irrelevant, abstract, only formal, based on a subject-object divergence, purely empirical—
INSTEAD OF A FREEDOM THAT IS
true, genuinely humane, essential, nonalienated, nonobjectified, concrete, socially rooted, profound, higher, true to its basic idea, based on a subject-object unity.

It ought not to be difficult to agree that restrictions on freedom are not quite so dangerous when we call them by their proper name instead of pretending that they are a more perfect form of freedom. Yet this awareness is of little comfort in the absence of agreement on what constitutes restrictions on freedom and what, safeguards.

Why this haziness? As every student of history knows, throughout the ages men have called freedom whatever they held in high esteem or thought worth striving after. Hardly any good that, besides its actual name, was not also called a freedom. A person who has enough to eat is said to be "free from want," and one enjoying security, "free from fear." Equality could just as readily be interpreted as "freedom from inequality," and knowledge as "freedom from ignorance." Since time immemorial Christianity has defined obedience to the Divine Will as "freedom from sin," and skepticism, at least since the 17th century, has been acclaimed as "freedom from superstition."

Conversely, anything evil, objectionable, or in any way restrictive has been labeled as unfreedom, as capitivity or serfdom. Without violating English usage, I may call someone a "prisoner" of error, a "slave" of passion, "in thrall" of fear, a "captive" of ignorance or sin, of disease, of law or lawlessness. Anything in any way restrictive—in other words, anything that prevents man from becoming an all-powerful, all-knowing god—can also be labeled imprisonment or absence of freedom.

It would serve little purpose to list further examples or cite additional sources to show how widely we use the term "freedom" or "unfreedom" to express a positive or negative judgment, to indicate something desirable. However, the fact that "freedom" has become synonymous with "worth" leads us to two observations, one trivial and the other more pertinent. As to the trivial one: it is pointless to derive a definition of "freedom" from historical instances of its usage, for we know in advance that this usage encompasses everything that has ever been held desirable or worthwhile or deserving of support.

As to the second observation, the semantic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

universality of the term should not be an occasion to bemoan human frivolity in the use of language. On the contrary, it is testimony to the magical power of the word. The word "freedom" enjoys such widespread applicability because throughout history it has hardly ever been opposed *under that name;* and on the occasions when that was done, the freedom that was being abrogated was declared to be a sham or a fraud, and it was to be superseded—so it was claimed—by a true, genuine, a deeper or higher form of freedom. Because of the magical force of the word, freedom can be attacked only in the name of a "greater" freedom. Hardly any political movement, ideology, or doctrine can do without the word "freedom" in its verbal arsenal. Deplorable as it may be, thanks to the magical power of the word, anyone claiming to "fight for freedom" is assumed to be "fighting for something"—in other words, it is a meaningless claim.

But we should not leave it at that. To do so would mean that we condone the irresponsible use of the word, that we acquiesce in all the ideological sophistries which can be based on the fact that, twist as we may the word "freedom," it always retains, within its sphere of associations, this central meaning: freedom amounts to the range of decisions that a social organization leaves to the individual.

The concept of freedom, therefore, is devoid of any meaning with respect to the imaginary "state of nature" that has preoccupied the philosophers of the *contrat social.* Or, to put it differently: the concept assumes meaning only when it is contrasted to law, i.e., as *limited freedom.* Inherent in the idea of freedom is the existence of something that is the opposite of freedom—the restrictions that are an inevitable part of all forms of social life. The only freedom we are familiar with is limited freedom, insofar as it is a characteristic of social life and constitutes itself in the realm of law as a sphere of *juridical irrelevance*—that is to say, a sphere in which the law claims no jurisdiction.

This very general characterization, which follows the traditional doctrine of 18th-century liberalism, tells us nothing that would enable us to determine under which conditions which sphere of freedom is either possible or desirable. Still, this characterization is not completely without merit, since it assumes that unlimited freedom is not possible and that the antagonistic interests requiring regulation by law represent a necessary part of social life.

As we know, this view of freedom was attacked by various socialist ideologies, particularly by Marxian social philosophy. Marx believed that the classical formulas of the Great Revolution, which defined freedom as the right to act free from all restraints within the limits of not doing harm to other people, presupposed a society in which individuals saw themselves as free-floating atoms pursuing selfish goals, as members of an abstract, "alienated" community, in the form of the state and of laws, one which would perforce limit or minimize the conflict of opposing interests. But for Marx this concept of freedom was the expression of a specific early-bourgeois ideal of free trade and free enterprise. Such freedom, as it were, perpetuates the antagonistic nature of human interests by hypostatizing it as a natural condition and certainly does not assure *positive* freedom—i.e., a condition offering the individual the social base that permits him to develop his potential in harmony with (instead of against) the general welfare.

But let us examine the assumptions of this critique. Quite obviously the individuals who make up bourgeois society are not atoms in the sense that all aspects of their lives are independent of social conditions. However, no liberal philosophy comprised such an "atomistic" model of society, nor did it require one. All models assumed that conflicts of interest constituted an irremovable part

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of social life and that therefore freedom could be defined only as a principle of individual choice within the limits of the restrictions imposed by law and the social organization. Marx, however, specifically opposed this assumption as an ideological mystification serving the perpetuation of capitalistic exploitation. In order to substantiate his critique he had to assume that all social conflict was the result of class antagonisms, and that with their elimination the future society would also do away radically with all conflicts of interest; consequently, the liberal idea of freedom did not apply to such a society, since freedom "within the limits of not doing harm to other people" necessarily presupposed such conflicts.

This very utopia of a conflictless society that makes no allowance for mutual restrictions on individual freedom became the source of a dangerous illusion. For it would be easy to conclude from it that once class antagonisms (in the specific Marxian sense, i.e., the conflicts arising from the private ownership of the means of production) were eliminated, the social structure would cease to generate conflicts of interest and that all conflicts appearing "on the surface" of the society were nothing but the residue of capitalist conditions of ownership. Thus the despised "negative" or "formal" freedom ceased to be of value since it served to perpetuate this "residue." By its very nature, the society would have no use for such a freedom. In this way a parody of Marxism helped to sanctify a parody of socialism, in which traditional freedoms are abrogated in the name of a "higher" freedom.

As it happens, the traditional "negative" idea of freedom is not based on unrestricted economic competition and, by extension, on exploitation, even though it is true that the two principles were amalgamated in mid-19th-century liberal ideologies. The linking of the two ideas called for another assumption, according to which freedom is a value that must be defended whenever it conflicts with other values; that would be true especially where the freedom of the stronger is asserted in relation to the weaker. And, in fact, classical mid-19th-century schools of liberalism maintained that all protective labor laws, all legal restrictions imposed by the state on the system of wage labor, violated the principle of a "free contract" between employer and worker. Socialists, and not only those of Marxist persuasion, rightly branded this view as the ideology of an unrestricted right to exploitation, and they sought to expose the sophistry of a "free contract" between an owner of the means of production and a wage earner.*

But this theory does not follow from the classical "negative" concept of freedom; in fact, by the end of the 19th century only a handful of liberal ideologues still held on to it. Upon closer examination, what in fact is so patently wrong with this theory? Why has the principle of juridical intervention in the relationship of capital and labor found almost universal acceptance in capitalist society, and how does it accord with the accepted sense of justice? After all, no one can deny that protective labor laws effectively limit the freedom of capital insofar as they are incompatible with the unrestricted freedom of contract. But the difference between the capitalist and the individual worker is not the difference between a free man and a slave but between a strong and a weak man. Therefore, labor laws accord with the general sense of justice not because they represent the realization of freedom but because they place a limitation on freedom in the name of justice, i.e., they defend the rights of the weak against the strong. In this sense all laws, of course, restrict personal freedom—and it cannot be otherwise. For that reason the claim to unconditional freedom, fatefully turning into its opposite, is identical with supporting the rights of the stronger.

---

* Editor's note: It must be remembered that "liberalism" in Europe refers to Adam Smithian free enterprise and *laissez-faire*—not, as in America, to social liberalism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As this extremely simple example demonstrates, the traditional "negative" idea of freedom does not assume that freedom and justice necessarily reinforce each other nor that freedom contains the answer to all social ills. Yet without a doubt freedom appears in this concept as an end in itself, as a value to be defended for its own sake and not only as a vehicle for other values.

From its inception, this concept of freedom, precisely because of the warning against trespassing on the rights of others, showed a tacit awareness that individual freedom could come into conflict with other values such as security, justice, the right of the weak against the strong. The freedom of the worker within the wage-labor system is not a fiction; what is a fiction is the assumption that the worker as the seller of his labor possesses the same bargaining power as the entrepreneur. Marx recognized that the freedom of the worker was not a fiction when he said that capital needed workers who were free in a dual sense: free from the means of production (they had nothing to sell but their labor power) and free from the restrictions that feudal law had imposed on the system of wage labor (they were granted the right to sell their labor in the marketplace).

To assert that under the system of wage labor personal freedom is nothing but a fiction violates both common sense and the Marxian philosophy of history: if it were so, there would be no difference between the social conditions of the workers and the slaves of antiquity, and this is patently absurd. On the other hand, the assertion that, historically speaking, the idea of personal freedom developed and became entrenched under the aegis of the bourgeoisie is true but completely irrelevant as far as the question of its value is concerned. The assertion that, because it originated in bourgeois ideologies and in connection with the interests of the bourgeoisie, it is therefore a sham and deserves to be destroyed is as absurd as the assertion that Euclidean geometry is false because it developed in a slave society and that "in the final analysis" its invention was dictated by the needs of the privileged classes of that society.

In making this point, I do not mean to say that the idea of personal freedom is "true" in the same sense as Euclidean geometry but only that neither social values nor scientific insights should be judged on the basis of their historical origins.

The critics of "formal" freedom generally resort to a dual mystification. First, they seek to prove that this type of freedom can exist alongside exploitation and injustice. That is true and self-evident, for freedom by itself does not automatically bring about the solution of all social problems. But it would be wrong to conclude that therefore "formal" freedom is worthless. And, second, by branding "negative" freedom as "formal," these critics imply that they are the champions of another, "genuine" freedom, of which we know little more than that it disposes of "formal" freedom—which means that it is despotism.

Another, and widespread, mystification consists in measuring freedom of choice with the yardstick of power. The specific cause of this confusion is Engels's definition based in part (but only in part) on Hegel, to the effect that freedom is "insight into necessity." This definition is to be understood not in terms of stoic philosophy—freedom as a purely intellectual confirmation of everything that is thought to be inevitable—but in terms of technology. That is to say: man is free to the extent to which he is capable of dominating nature with the help of science and its technical application, and also to the extent to which he is able to control social processes which, given the proper know-how, presumably can be predicted and regulated like natural processes.

This idea permits some peculiar conclusions. To begin with, it might be concluded that in order to measure the degree of free-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dom in a society we do not have to know anything at all about the rights granted its members but only about the level of its technology. The degree of freedom would stand in direct relationship to the degree of technological development. Champions of this definition do not as a rule carry the basic assumptions to this conclusion, which in many respects would turn out to be fatal. However, I fail to see how it can be avoided. And, second, this definition leads to the assertion that the degree of freedom of a society is directly related to the extent of regulatory control, i.e., that a society is the freer the more despotic its rule. This, too, is not a conclusion generally arrived at, even though it is an obvious one, since the idea of control over the social conditions implies no determination of its nature, of whether we are dealing with democratic or tyrannical controls.

I certainly do not wish to say that this definition is in keeping with Engels's intention. Nevertheless, we cannot escape such a conclusion if we try to define freedom arbitrarily in a way that leaves no room for individual freedom and lets all our concern be a vague freedom of society as a whole. What good is a freedom of an entire body if it is completely "alienated" from the freedom of the individuals making up that body? Why should it be called "freedom" at all, and why should it be seen as desirable? Engels has given us one of the many examples of the confusion that arises when one treats ideas bearing on the general welfare in isolation from individual welfare. When this sort of thought operation turns out to be successful, then any social system, however monstrous, can be exalted as the embodiment of the highest freedom.

Obviously the right to individual freedom of choice is doomed if the individual lacks the opportunity to make use of his right. But it does not follow that he should therefore be deprived of the freedom of choice. Of course the right to move freely is of little use to someone who lacks the necessary funds to travel, but it does not follow that he can be "liberated" by tying him down (in feudal fashion) to his place of residence. True, free choice of employment is meaningless in a society with mass unemployment, but it does not follow that true freedom consists in attaching man to specific places of employment, i.e., in a return to slavery. The right to publish is meaningless to people who cannot read, but this does not mean that a "deeper" freedom mandates the abolition of the freedom of the press. The right to education, the right to work, the right to retirement benefits—these certainly must be counted among the rights man may demand of society. However, they should not be labeled "freedom from ignorance" or "freedom from unemployment" or "freedom from hunger," for these rights could just as readily be guaranteed in a fascist state and even in prison. All these rights take on different meanings depending upon whether they are realized under conditions of freedom or despotism. The right to work exists even in the form of forced labor. The right to education can also be granted to persons who are deprived of sources of information and whose knowledge is reduced to blatant indoctrination. Therefore all of these rights, important though they may be, should not be named "freedoms." Too often such deceptive labels serve to rob the term of its root meaning and its value.

These observations have no bearing on the resolution of any specific social problem, for they offer no clue as to the conditions and the area of social life where, in case of conflict among values, freedom may be sacrificed to other values. It is very probable that such conflicts will multiply in democratic societies as well. The technological problems of our world would seem to indicate that important decisions will be made more and more by centralized power structures and experts, and that the individual is destined to become increasingly helpless

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vis-à-vis the social organism as a whole. The worst thing we could do in the face of this situation is to weigh down the idea of "freedom" with ever new and heavier burdens that would ultimately overwhelm the simple meaning of the word and reduce it to insignificance.

If the term "formal freedom" means the area of decisions left to the individual by the social organization and the law, then it means simply "freedom"; there is no other freedom. Those who employ the phrase "formal freedom" as a pretext to recommend another better more humane one, instead of the merely "formal" one, are simply, with a verbal sleight-of-hand, using deception to destroy freedom.

The question of whether freedom is a value is completely divorced from the philosophical debate over freedom of will and determinism. Like all questions dealing with ends in themselves, i.e., with values pure and simple, this question cannot be solved by scientific methods. We can imagine a society in which the value of freedom is not recognized at all. And we can't rule out the possibility that in the future man might be able to exist without a will of his own, as a tool of despots. Fortunately, past experience does not support such visions of the future. The sophistries which intend to rob the term of its accepted meaning involuntarily pay homage to the idea of freedom. By their deceptions its enemies concede that freedom is man's most precious possession and therefore cannot be fought under its right name. Like air, it is a treasure of which we are barely aware as long as we are not deprived of it.

Translated by JEAN STEINBERG □

CONTREPOINT

Revue trimestrielle d'analyse et de réflexion

A notamment publié dans ses derniers numéros:

NO. 12:
Alexandre Soljenitsyne: **L'hypocrisie de l'Occident**
François Bourricaud: **L'engrènage chilien**
Jean Plumyène: **Le retour du "bon sauvage"?**

NO. 13:
Daniel Bell: **Les contradictions culturelles du capitalisme**
Raymond Aron: **"Lectures" de Pareto**
Marc Fumaroli: **Sur Bergmann**

NO. 14:
Jean Laloy: **"L'archipel Goulag: un des livres du siècle**
Un inédit d'*Andréi Amalrik:* Les correspondants de presse étrangers, à Moscou.
Alain Besançon: **Présent soviétique et passé russe**
François Fejto: **Un itinéraire d'historien**
Alfred Fabre-Luce: **Bilan de la "détente".**
Et des textes de: Philippe Aries, Pierre Boulez, Stanley Hoffman etc.

BON DE COMMANDE

Je commande le n ° (chaque numéro 6 $)
Je m'abonne pour un an (quatre numéros: 20 $)
NOM: .....
ADRESSE: .....

Renvoyer à *CONTREPOINT*, 1 rue du Mail, 75002 PARIS, FRANCE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Patricia Cayo Sexton

Workers (Female) Arise!

On Founding the Coalition of Labor Union Women

> Girls, you must take this matter to heart seriously now, for you have established a union, and for the first time in woman's history in the United States, you are placed, and by your own efforts, on a level with men, as far as possible, to obtain wages for your labor. . . . Keep at it now, girls, and you will achieve full and plenteous success.
> —SUSAN B. ANTHONY, *at the founding of the Women's Typographical Union No. 1, 1868*

Women workers are equal to men at least in a quantitative sense. Well, almost. There are nearly as many women as men in the work force—about 43 percent of the total. When my mother was 20 years old, in 1920, women came to only 20 percent of the work force. Today, about half of all women between 18 and 65, including those with children, are working. The more education a woman has, the more likely she is to work, probably because she can get a better job and will earn enough to finance child and home care. Women are no longer marginal to the work force; they are in the middle of it, at least in numbers.

The biggest change among workers has been in the number of married women who work. In grandmother's time only the spinsters worked or the widow woman who took in washing. Now married women form by far the largest group of women who work. In 1971 married women comprised 60 percent of working women, followed by single women (22 percent of the total), widowed women (8 percent), divorced women (6 percent), and separated women (5 percent). Only about a third of all working women (35 percent) have husbands who earn $7,000 and over. Thus, two out of three women work because they have to. This need makes most women workers centrally concerned with economic issues.

Mothers are also doing it—working. While the number of women workers more than doubled since the early 1940s, the number of working mothers increased eight times! Half of all wives who worked in 1972 had children under 18. Even more striking, 28 percent of working wives had children under age six. While the increase of working mothers was about 11 percent between 1960 and 1972, the rise was 75 percent among mothers with children under age three—and only 2 percent of these children were in day-care centers. (In 1972 there were 5.6 million children under six who had working mothers, but only 905,000 day-care slots.)

Full-time, year-round women workers earn little more than half of what males earn ($5,593 to $9,399 for males in 1971). This vast discrepancy has less to do with unequal pay for equal work, an issue that has been settled on most industrial jobs, than with upgrading, promotion, hiring, and the *kinds* of jobs women perform. While the occupations of men are quite diversified,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women are much more likely to be clerical workers than anything else. More than one woman in three is a clerical worker. Only one woman in six is a blue-collar worker and those who are, work as "operatives" rather than "craftsmen." Indeed, the only large occupational group women have not cracked is that of "craftsmen." More women are farm workers (501,000) than craftsmen (360,000). Yet more men work in crafts than in any other occupational group (over 10 million). Except for elite jobs, the skilled trades remain the major male fortress.

About twice as many men as women are managers and administrators, the best-paying occupational group. About the same proportion of women as men are in "professional and technical occupations." As of now, the best opportunities for women are in these professional and technical jobs. More of these jobs are open to them, and women make a higher proportion of the average male salary (69 percent) than in other occupations. Also, two of the major hurdles to the upgrading of women are not present here: requirements of physical strength and the need to "boss" other employees.

The profile of the average woman worker has changed considerably. In the 1920s it was that of a young (average age 28), single, factory worker or clerk. Now it is that of an older (38) married woman working in a variety of jobs. If employment holds up, the participation of women in the labor force will continue to increase. Women will have smaller families, more time, more educational and job opportunities. There will also be more jobs they can do. They may even become craftsmen, as new technologies develop and as the performance of many jobs requires less physical strength.

For the great mass of women workers, economic upgrading can come through three main routes: (1) unionization; (2) upgrading and promotion on the jobs; (3) training for other jobs, in professional and technical occupations.

I CLUW

TO SEE what progress women workers were making along these routes, I attended the March 1974 founding convention of CLUW (the Coalition of Labor Union Women) in Chicago. It was probably the largest labor convention ever held, in all history. And almost nobody there but us women. While conventions (like fads) come and go, the significance of this one may long linger on.

About 600 delegates were expected when the meeting was planned a year earlier. But a few months before the gathering, registrations rose to 1,500. The arrangements committee was in shock. There was no place to seat, let alone sleep, so many people.

On the convention's opening morning the convenors (torn between joy and terror) announced that 2,100 delegates had registered. By afternoon, the figure had risen to over 3,200! Even the UAW, whose conventions are probably bigger than any other union's, draws only 2,500 tops.

Admission to the meetings required proof of union membership. Nobody could get in without a union card. Delegates came from 58 unions and every part of the country. Many paid their own way. Large numbers came from the AFSCME (State, County, and Municipal Workers), the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the American Federation of Teachers. Also strongly present were the IAM (Machinists), Typographers, Service Employees, Government Employees, Postal Workers, ILG (Ladies' Garments), Steelworkers. Communications Workers, Amalgamated Meat Cutters, Hotel and Restaurant Workers, Bakers and Confectioners, IUE (Electrical), and Teamsters. Thirty delegates came from the Newspaper Guild. There were also women (a few) from the Boilermakers and the Carpenters. The construction trades, however, were noted for their absence.*

* The officers elected at the meeting give us an idea of the range of major participants. Olga Madar of the UAW was elected president, and Addie Wyatt

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

• Tracing the origins of organizations is not easy. If they fail, nobody wants credit. If they succeed, everyone wants it. The idea for CLUW was put together by a small group of women who met in Chicago's O'Hare Airport. Fifteen had been invited, five came. They knew that women were ready to organize nationally, but they could list the names of only 99 women to call upon. They set the convention date, and a year later those 99 had multiplied to 3,200.

• There were women welders, foundry workers, machinists, pipe fitters, phone operators, typists, social workers, airline stewardesses, professors, waitresses—all active unionists.

One Big Industrial Union, just like the IWW: all ages, colors, occupations—but only one sex. Men were welcome but only a few came, and those few seemed as uneasy as a woman at a smoker.

Even some classical IWW rhetoric was heard, but it mainly irritated rather than persuaded or enraged the delegates. The mood of the convention was unique. It was businesslike, attentive, and friendly. There was no interest in sex, only in sex discrimination on the job; the unionization of 30 million unorganized women workers; and, most of all, basic economic issues. The mood was not hostile to men. Its dominant tendency was that of a loyal pressure group within the progressive unions—aimed at pushing those unions to achieve their objectives, and also at changing some of those objectives.

• It has taken a long time to get it together. While educated and/or professional women have been transformed, in attitudes if not life-styles, by the women's movement, working-class women had, until now, neither been seen nor heard. Some union staffers helped form NOW (National Organization of Women), but most women workers have been silent. Or, more correctly, nobody has listened to what they, or their blue-collar husbands, have said. Some women workers have been hostile to "women's lib," convinced it stood for adultery, abortion, lesbianism, thin-sweatered bra-lessness, for public breast-feeding of babies, unwed motherhood, and the subjugation of men. As it is written that the last shall be first, so in this case, the organization of women workers, slow to get started, may be around when some of the more trendy groups have vanished.

• In 1868 a smaller meeting took place in the office of Susan B. Anthony's newspaper *The Revolution* to talk about forming the Working Women's Association. Suffragette Mrs. Stanton was there arguing that women could not follow careers unless they won the vote and urging them to endorse women's suffrage. Several women typesetters were also there, including Augusta Lewis who said that endorsing suffrage would identify the organization in the minds of working girls with "short hair, bloomers, and other vagaries." She insisted that they deal with job issues first, and then educate women workers about suffrage.

Now CLUW has the same priorities.

• Evidence of changes in women workers has been lying about unnoticed. One collector (with an eye on selling products) has been Social Research Inc. In a study sponsored by *True Story,* it found significant change in working-class women over the past decade. It found they are now "a new social force,"

---

of the Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen—vice-president. Other officers elected were: Linda Tarr Whelan—secretary (she is deputy director of program development of AFSCME). Gloria Johnson—treasurer (director of education and women's activities of the IUE).

To balance the Eastern-Detroit-Chicago axis of the group, vice-presidents were elected for each region. Vice-president for the Eastern region—Joyce Miller (executive assistant to the general president and director of social services of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers). Vice-president of the Western region—Elinor Glenn (International Executive Board member of the Services Employees International Union). Vice-president for the Southern region—Dana Dunham (rank-and-file member of the Communications Workers from Atlanta).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and that they support most of the aims, but not the tactics, of the women's liberation movement. Most of these women are no longer the "captives" of family and tradition they once felt they were. They think women should be free to choose careers outside the home, and about a third said they would not choose homemaking if they had to do it again. Many feel that the women's liberation movement belittles the role of homemaker too much. Many had worked outside the home and had not liked it. But they are more interested now than ever in community, jobs, the larger world. More of them want smaller families; of those in their early twenties, 71 percent said they will have no more than two children. The small family tends to free the housewife. As consumers, they are more interested in things for themselves, especially labor-saving devices that free their time. They are less interested in products that merely help them serve their families.

Setting the Tone

OPENING THE CONVENTION, beautiful and black Addie Wyatt, director of women's activities for the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, said:

> People ask, "Why are union women getting it together?" I say, "Women everywhere else are doing it. It's time we did it." People ask, "Why can't the union resolve the problems?" I say, "We *are* the union. We are going to stay in the family and we are going to make our union responsive to our needs. This is not divisive of our union. We've given so much and settled for so little.
>
> Women work for the same reasons as men. They have to. Even when we disagree here, we don't have to be disagreeable. Don't *dis*respect each other. Women have been disrespected long enough. Let's not do it to each other.

Olga Madar, CLUW's new president, said, "The women's movement gave an impetus to our moving ahead." She praised the Women's Equity Action League, NOW, and the National Women's Political Caucus. Actually the relationship of the Coalition to the women's movement is more that of siblings than of child and parent. Both have the same origins. I believe those origins are less in ideas and movements than in economics and technology. Ideas are always around. They need something to germinate in, if they are to grow. That life-giving medium has been: (1) the relatively full employment of the last 20 years; (2) a technology that makes jobs easier for women to perform—as well as a method of birth control enabling people to regulate family size. The civil rights movement has passed on its inspiration. It has also passed on to women inclusion in the Civil Rights Act. It was almost a footnote to the law, but to women it has made all the difference. The civil rights movement too was born of an economy that could offer opportunity in industrial jobs (and education) to blacks.

I don't wish to deny people with ideas due credit for creating social movements. But our words are mainly transmitters. The main power comes out of the movement of economic and technological history. It is not impossible for women to get a fair or equal share when there is a scramble for scarce jobs and goods, but it is far easier to get that share (or at least some of it) when jobs and goods are in abundant supply.

The CLUW women, because they are unionists, understand this very well. Their brief resolution on legislation began: "The major concerns of women workers which require legislation are: *the economy as it relates to their livelihood;* the health and safety of themselves and their families; child care; equal rights" (my italics). Specifically, their first concern was raising and spreading the coverage of the minimum wage, an economic issue. Their concern was full employment.

There was no debate at the convention about birth control, abortion, marriage and the family. Most people regarded these issues as marginal and/or divisive. There was no expressed hostility to the women's liberation movement. A "gay caucus" advertised a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meeting, which irritated some women, but there was no discussion of gay issues aside from a roundly defeated effort to link gay job rights onto women's job rights.

The goals of the convention were to adopt a statement of purpose and an organizational structure. The adopted purposes were: (1) organizing unorganized women; (2) affirmative action in the work place; (3) political action and legislation; (4) participation of women within their unions.

It was the last that got the biggest audience response: ". . . to inspire and educate union women to . . . strengthen their participation, to encourage their leadership and their movement into policy-making roles within their own unions." As these women go into battle with employers and legislators, they naturally also want to put their own house in order. They want to move out of "women's work" in their own unions and into policy-making positions.

A hopeful aspect is that many union men support this goal. Indeed, many women I talked to said they came to the convention because a male union officer asked them to go. Of course, there is a long, hard road from going to a women's convention to membership on a local executive board. Too often "participation" means doing the flunky work, cooking and cleaning up, while men are paid to sit around and make decisions.

The "Left" Groups

JERRY RUBIN SAYS the women's movement is the great happening of our time: it'll remake society, alter the family, change relationships among people. Some "Left" or "ultra-Left" groups say women workers are the vanguard of the revolution. So it was that many of them flocked to the CLUW convention. The noise and disruption from some of those quarters had, however, an effect opposite of what they intended. They solidified the delegates against the disrupters and drove most people straight down the path of fundamental union solidarity. Said one delegate, "If they weren't around, we'd eat each other up."

God is said to have created a devil in order to drive us up the paths of righteousness. Could it be that capitalism created some of these "revolutionists" to drive union people into the kind of irritation and despair which reconciles them to private enterprise? Still, if there were a righteous God or a righteous capitalism, they would not have visited these plagues on a suffering humanity.

We have seen the demise of nearly every protest group that blossomed in the '60s, done in by haggling, sectarianism, disruption, and violence (or fantasies of violence). At the CLUW convention the same dangers were present. Some "Left" splinter groups came with their interminable, set speeches, repeating the litany of "revolution" no matter what topic was being discussed. They came with their minor skills in parliamentary bickering; their lack of sympathetic attention to other people who might be a good deal more thoughtful if less verbal; their incapacity or unwillingness to see, to listen, to respond to what was going on. However, they found a tougher victim in CLUW than elsewhere. After all, experienced unionists know how to run meetings, to keep people together and to the point, cut down the static. Groups devoted to libertarian principles and procedures, however, are particularly vulnerable to disruption. If you allow full and free discussion, your own people may walk out on you and the group will fold.

By and large, the CLUW convention was a superb performance, a demonstration of organizational talent and the ability to outcaucus and out-maneuver the disrupters.

• Not everyone on the "Left" was disruptive. After all, most of the women assembled—perhaps all of them—were rather far Left of Center as measured by most political yardsticks, myself and others like me among them. Most of them, however, are not organized into radical sects. Even among the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sectarians, many participated constructively and added contrast to the proceedings.

But a few were bent, consciously or not, on making the meeting unbearable. Every Marxist-Leninist, Stalinist, Maoist group was there, plus some new to me. Among the more disruptive ones were perhaps a dozen people (a virtual membership mobilization) of the Spartacus League, "a revolutionary Trotskyist organization," and the National Caucus of Labor Committees, a group given to disruption and violence whenever it comes to any sort of meeting.

• There were also caucuses from within unions: WAM (Workers' Action Movement) from the UAW; the Militant Action Caucus of the CWA (Communications Workers), which distributed its paper *Militant Action*. (The paper called for workers' control of what would in effect be company-financed "family centers," at the job location, to provide child care, laundry services, cafeterias—not a bad idea.) There was the United National Caucus, also active in the UAW, which distributed a publication calling for a labor party, support for farm workers, and the hiring of staff by the AFL to organize women.

At issue

ALL THIS AGITATION had little real effect. The statements of goals and structure, drawn up by the Planning Committee, were adopted essentially as they stood. The main conflict, incredibly enough, was over support of the Farm Workers' Union in their jurisdictional conflict with the Teamsters. The Planning Committee opposed a motion of endorsement because it wanted to avoid conflict between the two unions. It was an admirable enough goal in view of the fact that CLUW's endorsement could not help the Farm Workers anyway. A section on structure, which forbade endorsements in jurisdictional disputes, was defeated in a long and rather rowdy session, but the motion to endorse the Farm Workers was not even considered. Instead, at the concluding session, women from the Teamsters and the Farm Workers embraced on the platform and made moving pleas for unity for both women and farm workers.

If the purpose of this convention had been to deal with issues rather than structures, I would have thought the meeting had failed. Support of the Farm Workers, after all, is not an "issue"; it's a given. Everyone (almost) supports the Farm Workers. Had the Teamsters been foolish enough to withdraw over such an issue, it might have been just as well to let them go. The Coalition strained, perhaps too much, for unity.

At one point a woman rose to say that no reforms would do women any good. "How do we end women's oppression?" she asked. "We must destroy capitalism." There was loud opposition. So miffed was the majority with the "destroyers of capitalism" that their opposition became almost automatic. Aside from the farm workers' episode, the biggest and strangest issue arose in a snarled debate over whether "the Coalition will encourage democratic procedures in all unions." Since the "destroyers" insisted that unions were run undemocratically, others insisted they were not and voted to defeat the amendment. A standing division of the convention was taken on this issue, lasting almost an hour. The vote was close because many women, reasonably enough, felt that unions should be more democratic and voted with the "destroyers."

Factionalism can hurt. Here, it diverted people from real issues. As Addie Wyatt put it, "The thing young people need to learn is that, while we need democracy, we also need a procedure that works."

One woman was distressed by the dissention. Another woman said to her, "Honey, these things have been neglected so long. If you neglected your house, it would be a mess too. It would take a lot of cleaning up." Another woman said, "Sure, it's going to have imperfections. When a baby is born, it has imperfections. It can't see or walk or talk, but it learns."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II Precedents

THIS MEETING BRINGS TO MIND another one, held more than a hundred years earlier. In the winter of 1863, during the Civil War, when many women workers were underpaid and almost starving, a nameless mechanic suggested to a *New York Sun* editor that he advertise a meeting to help form a Women's Protective Association. Hundreds came.

> The hall was filled—full—with eager, trembling women, but they knew not what to do or how to act, and soon the scene was one of supreme confusion. At this juncture a motherly woman approached the gentlemen, and begged their interference.

The men took charge and appointed a committee that met in a Bowery hotel. The only recommendation they made was that women be paid for their work! "At this point the women present exclaimed, as with a single voice, "Oh, if we could always get paid for our work, we could get along."

My grandmother was eight years old in 1863. Times have changed, Women not only get paid for their work, they have learned how to run their own meetings.

CLUW has some real historic precedents, rich ones. The most similar organization was the Women's Trade Union League, founded in 1903 and flourishing through the '20s. The League came out of two currents: women workers who wanted to organize unions, and sympathizers among rich and professional women. Both were greatly stimulated by the suffrage and the labor movements. The primary purpose of the League was to help unions organize women workers. Its other major purpose was the education of women workers and the education of the public about women workers.

The League began at an AFL convention in Boston and held its first meeting in Faneuil Hall. Among the initiators were some influential middle- and upper-class people—Mary Morton Kehew (a wealthy Bostonian who had tried to unionize women since 1892 and who became president of the League), the socialist-philanthropist William English Walling—and, of course, that hearty, incredible trio of social workers: Miss Addams, Miss McDowell, and Miss Wald.

In 1910 there were an estimated 77,000 union women, most of them from the cap makers, glove workers, hat trimmers, shoe workers, typographers—all specialized but miserably paid "trades." There were also railroad clerks, department store clerks, waitresses, blookbinders, textile and cloth weavers, tobacco workers, and musical and theater arts workers. Unions composed largely of women arose in the garment trades as early as 1903. Much of the early organization was in the ILG (Ladies' Garment), a union that now has a vast majority of women in its ranks but few in its leadership. Women also helped organize the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and also continue to have a modest record of participation in that union. A major difference between the Coalition and the League is the former's vital concern about women moving up in unions, as well as on the job.

The League interlocked with two other major activities of women workers: the Industrial Department of the YWCA and the college summer schools, run first at Bryn Mawr, with faculties drawn from all the fancy women's private schools—Wellesley, Smith, Vassar, Mt. Holyoke. The summer schools ran for ten weeks and offered women workers studies in the liberal arts and the social sciences.

The YWCA not only participated in all of this, it was out in front, running classes, providing inexpensive housing, and organizing women workers. Both the women's colleges and the "Y" were supported by roughly the same people, mainly rich women (Eleanor Roosevelt, Mrs. August Belmont, etc.) who were influenced by the suffrage movement, or by socialist, union, or religious convictions. Many were recruited to this work by the social workers and settlement house women who helped administer the programs that were financed by the rich.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Almost all the women who later rose in the CIO and almost all women CIO organizers came out of this movement. Their collective energy gave rise to the federal Women's Bureau (founded in 1920). In New York and many other states, a minimum wage for women was won (the courts regarded the minimum wage for men as a violation of contract between employer and worker, but women, a subspecies like wild game, needed protection).* All the special protective legislation for women flowed from this movement. In those days the legislation was needed, yet could be won only for female workers. Now some of the laws are regarded as obsolete, some of them as discriminatory against women workers, and some of them as needed legislation that should be extended to men too.

The League finally went under, along with the other activities. Obviously, the Depression and then World War II contributed greatly to their demise. Also, when unions started calling strikes, and when they became successful, the rich women (and their husbands) took a second look. Some were gratified to see the unions take over, others were shocked by the violence and the demands women made.

Women's suffrage also took over. When it was won, back in 1919, a precipitous decline in women's activities followed. The women's problem, people believed, had been solved. That incredible generation of activist women died out; it left behind the frightened and unemployed women of the Depression, the busy women of the war and postwar decades—and now CLUW.

---

* In the period 1912–23, minimum wage laws, designed to protect women and minors in the manufacturing and service industries, were enacted in 15 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In 1923, the Supreme Court ruled this law unconstitutional (in the District of Columbia). In 1938, the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act was passed, which included the general Minimum Wage Law. (Source: *Handbook of Women Workers, 1969* [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Labor, U.S. Women's Bureau].

III Barriers

Upgrading

I ASKED WOMEN at the convention what they considered the most important issues for them on the job. Many said "equal pay." What they usually meant was not "equal pay for equal work," since most unionized jobs have that, but an equal chance to get a better job. They are concerned about upgrading, entry into male-dominated job classifications, and promotions.

A social worker from Illinois said, for example, that guards in their state mental hospital are paid much more than matrons. Both do much the same work except that guards have a few assignments that put them in a different, and higher-paying, classification. Many women talked about the "separate seniority lists" in their shops that kept them from moving into departments where the jobs and pay were better.

Several auto workers from Indiana said they were most concerned about "upgrading." In their plant (which makes compact transmissions with manual shifts, a good item these days), they recently had the first woman upgrader in 30 years. (In auto, an upgrader is an employee with seniority who moves up into a skilled trade, taking longer to reach journeyman status than the apprentice but making "the rate of the job" rather than the apprentice reduced rate.) They were quick to add: "It's the company's fault, not the union's." Two things were important in the new upgrading of women. The company hadn't hired women in 29 years; now they are hiring women. Also, the law helped. The company began upgrading women after charges had been filed with the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunities Commission). Then, too, some work classifications have been reserved for males. Tool and gage inspection, for instance, a good job but regarded as a "family man's job," was given out on the basis of seniority, of which men had more. Now women are moving into these classifications. Sometimes women can leap

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

across classification barriers simply by applying. One young woman (Doris Vanderhoogen of UAW Local 264 in West Allis, Wisconsin) became a foundry worker this way. She and a friend were desperate for a job that paid a living wage. They looked through the yellow pages for plant listings. When they came to "foundries," they said, "That's it. Those are male jobs so they must pay well." They called around and finally made an appointment to see the president of Federal Malleable. They persuaded him to hire them in the foundry.

> They called it "Bob's Follies." They said we would never last, that we couldn't take the heat and the dirt. When we walked in there, we were scared to death. At first there was some resentment from the men, but when they learned we weren't a threat, it was OK. We get on fine. There are 12 women now and 150 men. We do everything the men do except the actual pouring of the iron. The company will put women there too.

The good wages she makes? A base of $3.92 an hour, open to incentive pay up to $5.80 an hour. She has worked there almost two years. "They consider us like one of the guys. They hardly notice. I don't know if we should be proud of that or not."

She is a grinder. Castings come to her covered with large burrs and she grinds them until they are smooth. Women are oven tenders (baking the cores), shell-machine operators, furnace operators, everything.

> Most people look at me like I was crazy. You have to earn a living wage now. The working conditions are livable. Even if you don't look so good when you get off work, you accomplish something. It's going into something that women have never done before. It's pioneering.
>
> [She insisted, though I didn't ask:] I'm very proud to belong to the UAW. We get complete backing for equal pay and rights. The local president is fantastic. He backs us one hundred percent. We get help from all the staff. We have a very active Women's Advisory Council to the union in our region, and we get a lot of female participation. We counsel our own women, we carry on community action programs, and we branch out into other areas. CLUW is going to be one of the best things that ever happened to us.

An IAM woman (Machinist) from St. Paul, Minnesota, Lodge 1313, a local of 2,300 people, said, "A lot of the problems are the women's own fault. Women sit back, especially the young ones. Why don't they come to meetings?" She is the financial secretary of her lodge and has been for many years.

> I broke the ice. When I came in the men were nice but cold. It's different now. I joke with them and they joke with me. One financial secretary came to me and said, "You know, it's not that I didn't like you, but when you first came on this job I said to myself, 'If she can do this job, what is going to happen to my job?' "

She is Polish, single, and feels there is no discrimination either in the IAM or the plant. Women work on all jobs, she says, but they are not active in the union. She feels that Polish men find it harder to accept the change in women's jobs.

Her point of view is not uncommon among women who have been able to make it *alone* into men's work.

Language

OF 34 MILLION WOMEN in the labor force, 4.3 million belonged to unions in 1970 or better than 20 percent of all members. Moreover, women are at least half the members of 26 international unions. Yet they are only 4.7 percent of all union leadership. An estimated 35 women held major elective or appointive posts in national and international unions in 1970.

Among the barriers to women's participation in work and unions is language. Not the words, but what they symbolize. The word "brotherhood" is a clear example. It is a word that describes the essence of unionism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some unions address all routine mailings to local unions: "Dear Sir and Brother." The IWW greeting "Fellow Workers" was better. "Brother" is a clan sign of the fraternity of males.

Some women insist that these words don't matter, that the male gender is generic and stands for all of us. That's the trouble. It does. It is male, and it stands for us women too. It is no more satisfactory to us than "sisterhood" would be if we tried to include men under its umbrella. "Mankind" is also said to be generic, but we have the sex neutral words "humanity" or "humankind." Why not use them? A woman typographer at the convention reported she rose at her union meeting and introduced herself: "I'm Brother Mollie. If I can't beat you, I'll have to join you."

Then there is the more common vocabulary of the working world: "Workmen"; "manpower"; "journeymen"; the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America; the United States Office of Manpower Training. These symbols suggest that women are an appendage to the work force, which is hardly the case.

Women workers say repeatedly that they do not feel welcome or needed in the union hall. Some resist joining unions because the style, tone, and appeals are male. It is not *theirs,* they feel uneasy, and for the same reason that the token black in an all-white group is uneasy or the white in an all-black group.

Bargaining

ANOTHER OBSTACLE to participation of women in union policy-making is their lack of experience in negotiations. Collective bargaining is what unionism is all about, the basic function of unions. In the UAW, for example, only a small number of staff women are experienced negotiators. Yet all members of the UAW Executive Board must actively engage in contract negotiations. Simply enough, if women don't learn how to negotiate, they cannot function at the top level of their unions.

Women experience two main handicaps as bargainers, neither having to do with ability. One is the limitation that family responsibilities put on them. In a bargaining session a woman cannot get up and say "I gotta go now. My kids need me home." She has to stay in the session, no matter how long it runs. Bargaining is like that. In the bargaining sessions, the schedules are fixed and the outcomes are highly significant for the union. Other union activities, such as education and political action, can be arranged more easily.

Still, many women either overcome these handicaps or don't have them to begin with. In fact, women make good negotiators and some participate in, or lead, shop committees in their unions. But when the union hires a woman on its national staff, it may take the same woman who has successfully led negotiations in her shop and put her on a "special staff" rather than a "service staff." She will be assigned to a woman's department, or an education, political action, or health services department. Rarely will she be assigned to "service" a plant—to handle work grievances, shop disputes, negotiations, or anything relating to the collective-bargaining contract. But without staff experience in bargaining, she will have great difficulty functioning as an equal at policy levels within the union.

The Second Job

THE SECOND JOB—being a wife and/or mother—is one of the chief obstacles to participation of women in anything, from attendance at meetings to policy-making.

In addition to having a full-time job, a woman may have young children who need attention, or a husband who wants his dinner ready or who is afraid she will "meet someone else." She will have dozens of household tasks to do—literally a "second job"—and she will also have to find time to give her husband and children the attention they need. Or she may simply have a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

close attachment to her family and want to be home when they are.

As a result, we find the active union woman is often married but childless or with grown children; or married to a strong union man who encourages her activity (rather common); or single (the young, the spinsters, the homosexuals). A homosexual life-style is not an uncommon attribute of women leaders, in the union as in some other social movements, but a precise census is obviously lacking. Among family women, the barriers to union activity are often overcome by radicalism or very strong social convictions. The radical and/or homosexual women usually reject the homemaking and dependency role of women, so they are more assertive in the union and elsewhere. Neither radicalism nor homosexuality are "issues" among women unionists these days. Nobody seems to care very much. At least they don't talk about it. The occasions for concern are where radicalism becomes disruptive or where hidden agendas or other loyalties frustrate the majority will.

Coming out of a strong union tradition also helps—or being Jewish, or black. Increasingly, though, as other wives and mothers have taken jobs and raised their consciousness, they are coming up in the unions.

Travel is another obstacle for women. Many union staff jobs require travel as well as late hours. Women are often reluctant to leave town, to be on the road. Their husbands are even more reluctant to have them go. Besides, who will care for the kids? Also, travel is more difficult for women than for men. There is nothing to do in the evening in a strange town, and many women feel that bars are off limits for them. Besides, almost all married women are unable to move with their job. What would their husbands do? But union staff jobs often require resettlement.

Solidarity

THE NEED for clan ties and sex solidarity among women is apparent. By assigned role, women have been collectivists in the family but not outside it. Their welfare has depended almost solely on their ability, as individuals, to win the affections of a husband —in competition, and rarely in collaboration, with other women. While men are also competitive, they engage in many more group and collective activities with other men during their work and leisure.

Housewives work alone in their homes. They may see neighbors, even spend leisure time with them, but they very rarely develop the solidarity that comes from working together on something. Even outside the home—as clerical workers and as teachers—women often work either in isolation or under such close supervision that clan ties are inhibited.

Isolation and individualism are formidable barriers to the rise of women workers. Both unionization and upward mobility depend on collective action. Symptomatic of the problem are reports from various unions that women workers often raise "grievances" about other workers with their union representatives. The grievance procedure, of course, is designed to deal with grievances against employers. They complain to the union that fellow workers are bothering them, that they are not doing their work properly, that they are getting small favors, and so on. "The women bicker among themselves," one staff woman said. "Men are less bothered about little things, and they are more likely to settle conflicts by open arguments or fights, rather than by reporting them to the union. So there is less conflict among them."

One staff woman I talked to said that a woman called her one day from the plant and reported that a fellow worker was hiding behind a pole and exposing himself. This type of complaint is not uncommon among women who turn to the union for everything. In this case the staffer told her: "He doesn't have anything to show or he wouldn't be hiding behind a pole, so ignore him." Many "grievances" have even less substance.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Speaking Up

WOMEN are notoriously reticent about speaking up in groups. This shyness is a great obstacle to participation in the union and often on the job. Nor is this affliction confined to women workers. It affects all of us, but working-class people most of all. Many of them are trained to silence by their educational experiences, and to the conviction that they know nothing that is worth saying. For that reason, as my husband Brendan insists, all good labor education is aimed primarily at giving working people confidence in themselves and in their ability to reach people and influence events.

At the CLUW convention it was almost as if many women had to prove, "I will be outspoken." While this is a good antidote to silence, the ear of the listener often rebels. Without some substance to it, speech is only lip movement. Alas, even in the most informed circles (often especially there) it is just that. Most of the talking at the CLUW sessions, the "points of order" and the tangled procedural motions, came from younger women and many of them tried to score points for a "Left" sect. The more experienced women, knowing that talk is cheap, held their peace. Most were very attentive, but few were afflicted with the "Left's" popular passion for being outspoken even about trivia.

Of course, it takes courage to open one's mouth in public. Almost nothing we do is held against us so much as what we say, as though these weightless symbols were the voice of the heart, mind, and spirit, when often they only mask our inner qualities. Courage to speak and be judged has not been women's strong suit. We have excelled instead at less conspicuous, less competitive kinds of courage. While we need to cultivate more assertive types of courage, we may, I think, overprice the spoken word as a criterion for judging others, as distinguished from the written word, which can be more reflective. There is after all no proven connection between the number (and elegance or symmetry) of words spoken and other qualities we value in people: wisdom, judgment, intelligence, humor, generosity, loyalty, or the ability to do things.

I am grateful to working-class women for not, as a rule, overburdening listeners with verbosity. Usually what they say is simple and to the point. Sometimes what they say rises far above the eloquence of our graduate English faculties.

I am reminded of the dramatic scene at a Cooper Union strike-vote meeting of shirtwaist makers (including Triangle workers) in 1909. The meeting overflowed, but after endless speeches, including a long one by Samuel Gompers, people became restless and started to leave. Clara Lemlich, a teen-age girl, asked for the floor:

> I am a working girl, and one of those who are on strike against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether or not we shall strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared—now!

The strike called was the first large strike of women workers in this country, and the first significant strike in the ILG.

Such moments are rare. Few teen-age girls would have such courage. The silence of many women workers (and men) deprives them of a place in the sun. These women think they have nothing to say; they think nobody will listen to them. They are afraid to be noticed. They need public platforms and the opportunity to speak and debate. These CLUW can give them.

Authority/Respect

WE ARE TRAINED by home, school, and life for leadership or servility. We learn to direct and lead others or we learn to follow and be directed. Too often women are trained to be followers in their life's role, to depend on others, look to others for authority. Insofar as this is true, they are not fully autonomous people. It happens to us all to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some degree, but it is more exaggerated with workers, and doubly so with women workers. (The best workers' education is that which reduces the role of "experts" and increases the worker's own sense of autonomy.)

The acceptance of this servility role makes the transition to leadership and authority difficult—both for those in the new roles and also for those who are being directed. Some women have trouble being "bosses." They are inexperienced in the role and may not know how to act. Because it takes so much drive for a woman to become a boss, the people under her will sometimes complain that she is too tough and demanding. More often the problem is that they either do not accept a woman in a position of authority, or they feel it lowers their own status to serve under a woman. Then, too, the conditioned individualism of women may lead to some jealousy of those who move up, unless they are and remain one-of-the-girls.

That women have executive and organization ability is obvious when we look at the work they do for which they get no pay. Many women are excellent managers in the family, carrying on all the complicated organizational operations that are required in business. Women's unpaid executive talent also supports most of the religious, charitable, and voluntary organizations in our society. In the working world, however, all the rules change. In industrial work where men and women work together, and even where women predominate, very few women are promoted to foremen or other management jobs. The pretext is that workers will not accept women bosses. While this does often contribute, what is left unsaid is that the "management team" is rather like a club. A woman is not "one of them."

The names people give themselves and others are symptomatic of the problem. Women workers often lose their surnames, the name that gives them a family identity and the respect that somehow attaches to the surname. Instead of "Miss Jones," the clerk may be known as "Jane." And so will the maid, the waitress, the cashier. They will call their boss "Mr. Jones," but they will accept "Jane" for themselves. Often their last names will not even be known to the men they work for.

Even worse, women workers will often call themselves "Jane." At one large meeting of office workers, organized by unions and other groups in New York, at least three-fourths of the women wore big name badges on which they had written only their first names, and usually nicknames at that (Peg, Judy, etc.). It is revealing about the self-image of women workers. Their identity badge, their name, is tampered with anyhow when they marry and assume their husband's surname, so it doesn't really belong to them. It is almost as if a woman were a free-floating property ready to serve, to be accepted on a first-name basis by anyone, to be adopted into another group or family.

So it has been with blacks, children, and women workers. We have known them by their first names. While I like the familiar form myself—because it *is* friendly and working-class—this is carrying a good thing too far. Still, I also find it difficult to refer to women workers only by their last names, as is the academic custom: "Jones says. . . ."

Women workers are not children. Nor are they "girls," any more than blacks are "boys." They are entitled to the same respectful forms of address as anyone else.

Style

STYLE IS ANOTHER BARRIER. Women workers often lack the style of the upwardly mobile. All of us cluster in groups for status and security with people like ourselves, and we cement that fraternity by adopting their speech, dress, gesture. In a world of strangers we recognize our kinfolk by these clan signs, and we close our circles against intruders who lack them. Women workers do it. More often, they have it done to them. They are the excluded.

Gloria Steinem, who came to the convention, resembled nobody else there. They were

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women workers and she was, well, a unique woman, but also Upper East Side New York.

Many of the stylistic differences are so subtle that they require special study. A few of the more obvious are: Women workers (of the same age) are stouter than the Steinems. They are usually very neat and clean, but much less carefully and richly groomed. The colors are more vivid (less subtle) and there are more big stripes, many of them on broad beams. Almost nobody wears jeans, though virtually everyone wears slacks. Many "dress up" in the evening, even in long gowns. Hair styles vary over a great range. Some popular styles are never seen on the Upper East Side these days. The high pompadour, for example, with curls piled high on the head. A modified version of this, the teased bouffant, is still popular, though it has almost disappeared among the fashionable. "Natural" styles are less common, among both white and black women, than in fashion centers. Many black women process their hair or wear wigs. Only a few wear Afros. Among the over-twenty white women, neither extra-long nor extra-short hair, natural and uncurled, are popular as they are with upper-class women. Almost none of them (except the younger "Left" women) have hair that looks uncombed. Another unique working-class style is what we used to call the "boyish bob," only this one has a slight bouffant on the top. While the older working-class women keep to traditional styles, the younger ones look and dress more like middle-class and college women.

Does all this matter? I think it does. At any rate, it is hard to talk about women without talking about hair, fashion, style. This too is part of the problem.

To Our Contributors

- When sending manuscripts, please make sure that you do not send your only copy.
- And please also be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. —THE EDITORS

IV UAW Women

A UAW Case Study

DYNAMIC new CLUW President Olga Medar —also the first woman to have been vice-president of the UAW, and so the most important union woman in the nation—has recently made a study of female participation in her union.* As far as I know it is the only study of this kind around.

The UAW has a great many women members. The exact figure is unknown. In GM alone, among hourly employees, there were 61,459 women in 1972. That is 15 percent of total hourly employees at GM. Ford has 16,500 women or 10 percent of the total. Chrysler, including salaried employees, has 11,816 women or 9 percent of the total. It is estimated that, over all, about 13–14 percent of all UAW members are women.

In the UAW there are 74 women local union presidents, or 5 percent of the total. Women comprise 7 percent of local vice-presidents, 16 percent of financial secretaries, and 26 percent of recording secretaries. In these four top local offices, women comprise 13.5 percent of the total, which is almost exactly proportional to their estimated membership in the union. As we might expect, women are overrepresented among "recording secretaries" (a women's job). But they are also overrepresented among financial secretaries, often *the* major office in the local union. Where locals have only one full-time officer, it is usually the financial secretary. Women are likely to be elected to these jobs because they are thought to be better at keeping records and more honest, both of which are indispensible traits for the financial secretary.

These local officers administer the local union. Rarely, except in large locals, do they engage in collective bargaining. As for women leadership in the bargaining process: 85 women or 4 percent of the total num-

---

* Olga Madar retired from the UAW in June to take on CLUW full-time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ber are chief stewards in their shops (often a full-time job); 151 women or 5 percent of the total are district committee persons (also often full-time); and 972 or 8 percent of the total are stewards or alternate committee members (the most humble leadership role in the shop).

A surprising number of women—82—are the chairpersons of their local bargaining Shop Committee, and another 234 are members of those bargaining committees. This is where the union's action is. Still, they are only 6 percent of the total number of people on these committees. (A quota would more than double their numbers on bargaining committees.) The shop chairperson is in charge of bargaining and, except in the large locals, is usually more important than the president of the local.

Then we come to the second line of the union's offense: political action. It is reported that 708 women are county or area (Community Action Program) CAP Council delegates. This is 12 percent of the total. Women are, it appears, much better represented in political action than in collective bargaining.

Underrepresented as they are, these women still add up to a sizable figure. In the UAW there are 3,497 women who occupy important local leadership positions or enough, by themselves, to fill a mammoth convention hall. If we add to these the women who are officers in local units (units of large plants or of amalgamated locals)—and the chairpersons and members of local committees (recreation and conservation, constitution and by-laws, antidiscrimination, community services, education, consumer affairs, publicity, election, retired members, apprentice, pension, supplementary unemployment benefits, women's councils)—we come up with the grand total of more than 6,600 women in leadership roles in the locals, or 10 percent of the total number of leaders.

But the picture changes at policy levels in the international union. Of the approximately 800 "international representatives" of the UAW, only 20 are women—2.5 percent of the total. As for women in appointed top positions, one is an assistant regional director, none are administrative assistants to the top officers, one is a department head (Women's Department); one is an assistant department head—a total of three.

Audrey Farman, a UAW "Rep"

AUDREY FARMAN, articulate, and all-woman, went on the UAW staff early in 1973. She works on the TOP staff (Technical, Office, and Professional), and she does mainly collective bargaining and arbitration on her job. The company representatives were a little shocked when she first walked into bargaining sessions, she says, but they got used to it. Having women in there raises the level of negotiations to what it should be. Before joining the staff she worked for 15 years in the purchasing department of McDonald-Douglas in Tulsa, Oklahoma. More than 50 percent of the workers in her offices were women. Most of them were in labor grades four and below. At the same time, 50 percent of the men were in grades nine and above; there was not a single woman in those grades. Yet the plant had a government contract, and it was five years after the federal law providing civil rights for women was adopted. Many women had a better education than the men, and more seniority. Still men were brought in off the street to fill the higher grades. As she told me in an interview:

> I sat there 15 years as a purchasing stenographer and watched men come in off the street, from the stock room, into buyer's jobs. To this date, no woman has been promoted to buyer. . . .
>
> [She began to have conflict with a new supervisor.] It put me in the hospital on the verge of an ulcer. Another girl had a nervous breakdown. The Doctor said, "Whatever it is, get it off your chest." I made up my mind no supervisor would ever do that to me again.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After we organized, I never had these problems. Suddenly we could speak our piece without fear of being fired. As long as we were doing a good job we felt we had a right to say to the company, "this is a better way of doing it." It's a question of being listened to, on an equal level. It's a question of getting the respect your ability and seniority deserve.

The men always say the women won't come to union meetings. When they're in a majority, men make women feel they're not really wanted. It's important to feel needed, wanted by somebody. Here, at the convention, there was no end to the amount of work that women would do when they knew it was needed. Here they knew they had something important to do. Most of the women went to meetings almost every night, so it can't be said that women won't go to meetings. They'll go if they feel they're needed.

It's difficult to organize office workers. In most plants they automatically get the economic benefits of the shop's collective bargaining. As a union, we have to offer them something over and above that. We offer them the right to the grievance process, arbitration of their grievances, seniority rights, a system through which to get them upgraded and combat the past effects of sex discrimination. It's not only sex discrimination: there are lots of men who have been passed over. The office person is often afraid to organize. In the shop people work somewhere on their own. The foreman is not on top of them. They can talk to each other and get something started. In an office, you work side by side with people in management. It takes more courage.

We now see a number of large international unions organizing office workers, getting some momentum. The trend of the work force is toward office, technical and professional—and less to production. As that happens, we will organize more and more people. And as some jobs become computerized, the clerical people will fear the loss of their jobs and will want to organize.

We rarely handbill a plant with office workers. We work with people individually and in groups. We have people who understand the problems. Our staff members are people who organized their own offices, so they can show people they don't have to be afraid.

The UAW is putting more women on staff. Women can organize as well as men. It used to be that women listened only to men. Now they take pride in listening to other women. All women have been reached a little by the women's liberation movement, and every day it affects them more. It has affected the law and the company policy. We see all women becoming more aware of their rights. When the word "sex" was added to the discrimination law, there were women who never thought they were discriminated against. The law had a profound influence.

Speaking up has done wonders for labor-management relations. I'd rather see women angry than wallowing in fear and apathy. It's healthy to disagree. Men have always disagreed. Even if we women do it spiritedly, it's good. It's time we stopped saying "yes." If we disagree here, at the convention, and say so with fervor and vigor, we can go back into the plant and do it there too, where we need it most. I like to see dissent, so long as a healthy decision comes out of it.

We women have gained through our unions the spirit and the courage to stand up and fight for what we believe in. I would be very worried if women sat there and only said "yes." I'd have the feeling the unions hadn't done us any good at all. As long as we end up together—solidarity forever—it shows we can create something important here. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

David Selden

Al Shanker and I

In recent months there has broken out in the American Federation of Teachers a sharp factional dispute between David Selden, the AFT president, and Albert Shanker, head of its powerful New York affiliate. This dispute involves not only intra-union issues but political and intellectual matters of wide-ranging interest.

Last April Shanker proposed that Dissent *print in its summer issue—just before the AFT convention—articles by Selden and himself presenting their views. We agreed, of course, and got in touch with Selden, who also agreed.*

When the deadline arrived, Selden sent in his article, which appears below, but Shanker, informing us he was beset by a number of union crises, did not. We delayed publication several times, hoping that he would be able to send in his piece, but finally had to go ahead without it.

If Shanker would like to reply to Selden, space will be provided in our next issue. There will also appear a report on the AFT convention by Stanley Plastrik.—ED.

If Al Shanker had emerged somewhere in New Mexico in 1950 the world would have been none the wiser. But Al Shanker in New York City in the turbulent 1960s was an entirely different thing. It was a classic example of the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I first met Shanker in the late 1950s. He was one of half a dozen younger members of the executive board of the New York Teachers Guild, AFT Local 2. I was the Guild's organizer and general factotum. In the five years from 1957 to 1962 the Guild, a relatively small organization with social democratic traditions, moved out of the welter of New York teacher groups to become the exclusive bargaining agent for all 45,000 members of the teaching staff. The most influential of the young Turks—until his sudden death in 1960, from a heart attack—was Eli Trachtenberg.

The contrast between Shanker and Trachtenberg is instructive. Trachtenberg was a socialist, ironically, from the same Shachtmanite faction which now controls the United Federation of Teachers and several AFL-CIO-sponsored front groups. Before becoming a teacher he had worked in the auto plants around Buffalo, and he clung doggedly to his proletarian values. Trachtenberg believed in militant, democratic, Reuther-style unionism.

Shanker also presented himself as a socialist in those days. By 1957 his devotion to socialist objectives had dimmed, however, a rightward drift which has continued to the present. Organizing the union, like bridge, which he taught in night school, was a game to be savored for its own sake.

I too considered myself a socialist then, as I do now, but strangely, I had never been a member of any organized political group.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Trachtenberg's well-developed ideas, therefore, held a strong attraction for me. One purpose of organizing was to create a vehicle for socialist action. Furthermore, we should press for a collective bargaining (CB) representation election even if we could not win it because the CB situation would inexorably force the winning organization to become a union whether it had been one in the beginning or not. Militant action by workers was always to be supported regardless of organizational sponsorship. This last Trachtenberg teaching was particularly important in the Guild's rise to power.

Throughout the 1950s New York City teachers were becoming more and more disgruntled. Once the best paid and most prestigious teachers in the nation, their status was steadily undermined in the postwar period by inflation and deteriorating social conditions in the city. In addition, the world's largest educational bureaucracy at 110 Livingston Street in Brooklyn treated this highly qualified staff with arrogance and contempt.

In January of 1958, the evening high school teachers, affiliated with the Guild's strongest rival, the High School Teachers Association, called the first teachers' strike in the history of the city. In organizational warfare the normal tactical response to a move by a rival would be nonsupport—perhaps even active resistance. But chiefly at Trachtenberg's urging, the Guild gave all-out support to the night school stoppage.

The strike lasted a month, and by the time it was over the militants in the Guild had found their like numbers in the High School Teachers Association and were talking merger of the two groups. Two years later, in February 1960, the UFT was formed by merging the Guild with HSTA militants, who had broken away from the Association. Within two more years the UFT won exclusive representation rights over a hastily constructed coalition of conservatives sponsored by the NEA.

Throughout the five years of the collective bargaining drive Shanker and I became increasingly intimate. By coincidence we had moved into neighboring apartments in Morningside Gardens, the Title I Co-op north of Columbia University. We had a genuine liking for each other. We were constantly in and out of each other's apartments; we rode back and forth to union meetings together, and we often conferred by phone. When Carl Megel, the AFT national president, asked me to recommend someone to become an organizer, I chose Shanker.

Labor tradition assigns a unique role to the organizer. He is recognized as a leader; his recommendations have great authority. And yet he usually does not assume political power in his union. That had been my role. I held the vague title of "special representative," and while I sometimes represented the union in my own right, my main function was to back up Charles Cogen, president of the Guild–UFT from 1951 to 1962. In fact, I did not even become a member of the local lest I be considered a political rival.

Originally Shanker was content to be a partner on the organizing team. Soon after the UFT won the CB representation election, however, it became apparent that he had strong political ambitions. One night he informed me that he was *not* going to run against Cogen for president, even though he was on his way to meet with a group that wanted him to run.

From then on it was only a matter of time before Shanker realized his ambitions. He gave a nod to labor tradition by returning to the classroom for a brief stint, but in the spring of 1964 he became UFT president, while Cogen, a few months later, became president of the American Federation of of Teachers.

I had a strong hand in Cogen's rise to AFT president, although quite by accident. My interest in the teachers' union had long been national.

I hoped that the AFT could, in concert with other progressive unions, be a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

liberalizing force within the labor movement. Consequently, immediately following the UFT victory in New York in December 1961, I suggested to AFT president Carl Megel that the position of AFT Director of Organization be established, and I stated that I would be a candidate for the job.

Even though it was apparent that the day of the teacher was dawning at last, Megel was slow to act. He shared the paranoia common among politicians, particularly those of the labor variety, and he believed I had some scheme in mind for personal advancement. Therefore, when after great pressure from the AFL–CIO Industrial Union Department, then bank-rolling teacher organizing, the director of organization position was established, Megel saw to it that the job went to a young New Jersey organizer who was not considered a political threat.

Temporarily frustrated, I hit upon the idea of a Cogen candidacy for AFT president and began making plans accordingly. In the meantime I worked closely with the IUD to initiate CB campaigns in Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. I also began commuting from New York to Detroit, at UAW expense, to get things moving there.

It was a period when everything worked. Within three years or so, teachers in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Detroit won collective bargaining rights; Shanker became UFT president, Cogen became AFT president, and I became assistant to the AFT president—a solid vantage point from which to pursue my objective of making the teachers' union a national movement.

The AFT national office in 1964 was still in Chicago. When I left New York to take up my new duties the close association between Shanker and me was interrupted, although we conferred frequently by telephone and I always stayed with the Shankers when I was in New York. We often discussed the functioning of the New York local.

Shanker was preoccupied with completing his control of the UFT during his first years as president. His concept of union functioning was frankly centralist. Committees and other forms of democratic participation in union affairs were difficult to keep operative, so the best way was to rely on paid staff to get jobs done. This was not really undemocratic, Shanker maintained, because that way the members could hold the president responsible for the effectiveness of the union.

This corporate form of organization is still Shanker's model. At the 1974 Montreal convention of the New York State United Teachers he defended his methods by insisting that a large staff was essential because "we used to be losers, but now we have the power to win." Tom Hobart, president of NYSUT and Shanker's upstate echo, at the same convention reminded a reporter that the union was a big business. A few weeks later, following the same theme at a press conference, Shanker stated that the AFT had become a big organization and could no longer be "run like a corner grocery store."

The centralist theory of administration is certainly defensible—if one ignores the reality of machine politics. Today the UFT is controlled by a pyramid of staff members and others receiving special advantages of one kind or another.

At the apex is Al Shanker.

A large portion of the UFT executive board is on the union payroll. Binding everything together is Shanker's Unity Caucus, which functions not unlike the Communist party in the Soviet Union. Discipline is rigid. The total membership of the Unity Caucus is a small fraction of the UFT membership, yet no one gets elected to UFT office without its endorsement.

Along with Shanker's corporate power goes suppression of minority representation. All officers and delegates are elected by slate voting—with no representation for the minority, of course. Shanker excuses such practices by holding up the 1930s New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

City Council election as a horrible example of the unworkability of proportional (minority) representation, not mentioning that the ill-fated New York experiment used a particularly complicated form of the O'Hare system.

I was elected AFT President in 1968. The first open break in my relationship with Shanker occurred at the AFT convention the following year. Working with other conservative leaders, he defeated, over my opposition, liberal resolutions on the war in Southeast Asia, student rights, direct election of the AFT president, and a number of other issues. Following the convention I resigned in protest from the Progressive Caucus, the majority party in the AFT and the national equivalent of Shanker's New York Unity Caucus. I said the Progressive Caucus was neither progressive nor a caucus.

During the six months following the 1969 convention I negotiated with Shanker and other AFT leaders for a series of progressive proposals for the 1970 convention, with the result that most of the conservative stands of the previous year were modified. In addition, I got Shanker to go for a 25 cent increase in per capita to be used for a strike fund.

Even so, my truce with Shanker was an uneasy one. It was clear that we were on a collision course. In the fall of 1972 hostilities broke out into the open. The issue was the AFT's relationship to the AFL–CIO.

Taking into account the extreme left-to-right distribution of the more than a hundred constituent unions of the AFL–CIO, to say nothing of unaffiliated unions, George Meany has done a remarkable job in keeping the labor federation together. Under Meany's guidance AFL–CIO policy, except for the Vietnam war, trade, and perhaps environmental issues, has been reasonably liberal.

I have long believed, however, that the AFT should work with other liberal unions to increase the liberal commitment of the AFL–CIO. Shanker has never seen it this way. Hence, when 35 unions representing more than half the unionized workers of the nation joined together to oppose the reelection of Richard Nixon, Shanker stayed "neutral" along with Meany.

There is no doubt that Shanker's role in the 1972 election cemented his relationship with the Meany administration, but personal ambition aside, he scarcely needed this motivation. For one thing, the Shachtmanite democratic-socialist faction, with which Shanker works closely, has long supported military containment of Communism. George McGovern's outspoken condemnation of the war in Southeast Asia therefore made him suspect—an impression the New Politics types around the Senator did nothing to dispel.

Another inhibiting factor was the attitude of the New York labor movement. In the spring of 1972, long before either the Republican or the Democratic conventions, the entire labor officialdom of the city, Shanker among them, attended a riproaring political clambake at Governor Nelson Rockefeller's Westchester County estate. No votes were taken and no commitments expressed, but jolly good feeling was rampant. It is hard to say what teachers got out of Rockefeller's romance with labor, but one of the celebrants, Peter Brennan, is now Secretary of Labor.

In the fall of 1972, even as the Nixon/McGovern campaign was in progress, Shanker asked my support for his candidacy for a spot on the AFL–CIO executive council. I refused and referred the question to the AFT executive council. The debate was bitter. Shanker stated that he had the support of the Meany administration and that I was unacceptable. I took the position that it was better to stay off the council than to gain a seat by Meany's permission.

The AFT executive council, by a narrow 11–9 voice vote, went for Shanker. Once this initial vote was taken, the succeeding roll-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

call votes formalizing the action were 20–1. Shanker was nominated by the AFL–CIO executive council by an 18–8 vote and was elected to the council by the 1973 convention.

Ironically, the final piece in Shanker's design for control of the AFT was consummation of the merger between the New York State AFT and NEA units in May 1973. I say "ironically" because, as a proclaimer and chief sponsor of teacher unity, I became its chief victim. Whatever else it did, the New York merger gave Shanker absolute voting control of the AFT convention. More than 200,000 of the AFT's 400,000 membership is now in New York State, and while some locals have managed to stay independent, these defections are more than offset by eager bandwagon riders from other locals across the country. The history of AFT events following the capitulation of the AFT executive council to Shanker's 1972 demand for endorsement of his candidacy for AFL–CIO vice-president must be left for other chronicles. They would include Shanker's attempt to force me to resign in April 1973 following a critical interview I gave to a *New York Post* reporter; NEA interest in national merger talks during the summer of 1973 and the break-off of those negotiations in February 1974; my peacekeeping efforts at the 1973 convention and Shanker's subsequent Pearl Harbor Day sneak attack on me; my efforts to carry on AFT affairs in spite of Shanker's massive, underhanded campaign of harassment and sabotage of AFT functioning—and other happenings.

One other matter must be dealt with before I sum up. At his news conference on April 28, 1974, after reciting a long record of personal actions for civil rights dating back to his college days, and after telling about the good things he had done for paraprofessionals in New York City, Shanker turned to a black teacher in his audience and demanded, "Now, am I a racist?"

I make no estimate of the amount of racism in Shanker's character; all of us, of whatever color, have some of it. But what does come out is his unwillingness to share power with anyone, black or white. The UFT paraprofessional operation is run by Velma Hill, a hand-picked leader who was never a "para"—she holds a master's degree from Harvard. There are almost no blacks in the elected UFT apparatus, or that of NYSUT either; the visible blacks are in staff positions. Shanker eschews the Black Trade Union Leaders Coalition and works closely with the AFL–CIO-financed A. Philip Randolph Institute, which, just incidentally, is housed in the UFT building.

While the controversial Ocean Hill-Brownsville strike of 1968 was primarily a struggle to preserve union contract rights and to protect due process, it was also racially polarizing; yet no meaningful effort at white-black, union-community rapprochement has been made in the nearly six years that have passed since that tragic event. A proposal of mine that the UFT create a "vice-president for community affairs" was impatiently rejected. The UFT has no department of human rights.

What of the future? The Shanker issue goes far beyond the usual political contest where somebody wins and somebody loses and life goes on much as before. If Shanker does to the AFT what he has done to the UFT and NYSUT—he plans to keep all three posts—all liberals lose. Shanker has aligned himself with the conservative forces within the Democratic party. He is a strong backer of the pro-Jackson (Senator Henry) Coalition for a Democratic Majority.

Shanker has become a power in New York Democratic party politics, mainly by backing conservatives against reformers, liberals, and insurgents. If Henry Jackson becomes president of the United States in 1976 you can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expect to find Al Shanker in the door of the White House when it comes to matters affecting education.

A machine such as Shanker has put together in New York is hard to fight. Shanker has political power, money, and the backing of the labor establishment. He is as ruthless as he is megalomanic. He is now determined to go nationwide, and it looks as though he may succeed—for a while.

But the AFT is based on local autonomy. As the AFT constitution now stands, at least, the national organization cannot even put a local into trusteeship. There are strong indications that, outside New York City, a secret vote ballot would show Shanker has the support of less than half the members. AFT members must do what the coal miners and other progressive rank-and-file groups have done. We must keep up the struggle—and keep up the faith—for liberalism and democracy. □

Postscript

SINCE THE ABOVE was written, Shanker's campaign for AFT president has taken an ugly turn. In a mailing sent nationwide in June, Shanker lists paragraph after paragraph of untrue and deceptive statements.

Item seven in this list of ten states that Shanker should be supported in order to "repudiate extremism." The paragraph is a blatant McCarthyite red smear. Shanker seeks to have people believe that the AFT is in danger of being taken over by "the Communist Party and other extremist groups." His concluding line would be hilarious in a less serious connotation: "I will not accept the support of any of these groups."

Shanker's own extremist actions do evoke extreme reactions. He repudiates liberal positions that have long been part of the underlying philosophy of the AFT, divides and polarizes the membership, and betrays the liberal tradition of our union. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

François Bourricaud

Chile: Why Allende Fell

In our Winter 1974 issue we printed an analysis by Stanley Plastrik of the political events in Chile that enabled the military junta to overthrow the Allende regime. He wrote:

> Either the government recognizes, *in time,* that the middle class constitutes a major social force whose interests must be consulted and whose fears must be allayed—and we speak here not of a tiny group of capitalists, but of hundreds of thousands of people of quite modest means—or the Left decides that the course of democracy is a delusion and that it must begin to prepare for the Leninist or Castroite dictatorship. . . . It is greatly to Allende's credit that he does not succumb to the authoritarian lure of the latter course, but it is by no means to his credit that he fails to recognize the necessary constraints which the democratic course demands.

The article we reprint below, by a sociologist who teaches at the Sorbonne and is a Latin-American specialist, extends the views developed in Plastrik's comment. This article first appeared in Contrepoint, *November 1973, and is reprinted here with the permission of the author and editors. It has been slightly abridged.*—ED.

The death of Salvador Allende, either by suicide or assassination, and the pitiless repression that followed the liquidation of his regime, have complicated the observer's task. Everyone is outraged, and rightfully so, at the violence done to Chilean constitutionality and civilian rule. I concur unreservedly with this censure. However, I cannot refrain from observing that many of those who today denounce the Santiago putsch were ecstatic over the *golpe institucional,* which in 1968 enabled the "progressive" Peruvian armed forces to depose President Belaúnde and impose a strictly autocratic regime.

The French Left now, in its embarrassment over the collapse of the experiment it had endorsed rather off-handedly, is resorting to the most threadbare explanations. In French Left opinion, the overthrow of Allende is a deplorable event without the slightest connection to the policies pursued since 1970 by Chile's "Popular Unity" government. And so the disaster is simply the result of a plot hatched by the usual devils: the fascists, the military, the "monopolies." To condemn the rupture of constitutional legality is a duty I support. The same goes for aid to the victims of the Junta. But also to acknowledge the relationship between what the leaders of the Chilean Unidad Popular did, or did not do, and what later happened to them—is that too much to ask?

When I speak of Allende's failure, I do not gloss over the relativity of the term. In many ways, for example, the French Popular Front of 1936 was also a failure; but even its adversaries would agree that it left an indelible mark on labor legislation. I cannot judge whether the Allende regime will leave a comparable heritage but am inclined

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to believe it will find a place in history simply because it focused on the long overburdened rural population: this, in a way, was an immense achievement. Still, there can be no denying that the power Allende assumed in 1970 was lost in the short span of less than three years. Allende failed to master his mount: in fact, he was thrown from the saddle, and that is failure. It is this failure that we must explain.

ONE REASON for Allende's misfortunes was that neither he nor his socialist friends ever really knew what they wanted. The proof is in the following passage by Régis Debray:

> Allende showed me a copy of the book on guerrilla warfare Ché had inscribed for him: "For Salvador Allende, who seeks to achieve the same end by other means." And Allende commented: "The revolutionary struggle may be a guerrilla campaign, a people's war, an insurrection, or a general election, depending on its specific content." *

The inherent ambiguity of the Unidad Popular is apparent in this seemingly straightforward passage. It seems to imply that there is *some* point in making a distinction between two kinds of situations: those in which democratic processes favor the material and spiritual improvement of the underprivileged, and those in which one must first "bring the whole house down." In that case, nothing very new is being said—unless it is that prudence recommends exhausting all political avenues before resorting to insurrection. At first reading, then, Allende seems to be saying simply that if guerrilla warfare no longer makes sense—say, in Sweden, England, or even contemporary France—it may constitute the *ultima ratio* in Bolivia, and under certain circumstances in Chile.

But Allende's statement also suggests something entirely different. It implies the possibility of using elections to "radicalize" the political situation. Elections may rapidly render the situation truly revolutionary, pushing things to the point where the seizure of power becomes inevitable. That this was what Allende meant is clearly revealed in the rest of his dialogue with Debray. "Lenin," recalls Debray, "said that there were two types of reforms: those that try to foil revolution, and those that try to promote revolution." The Chilean President's response is not surprising: "Our reforms are those that promote revolution." Debray continues:

> I objected to this, reminding him of what he himself had said—that the era of the Popular Front was over in Latin America. "This is no Popular Front," answered Allende. "A workers' front, perhaps, or a patriotic front, or a movement of popular unity, but always with a central nervous system directly activated by the working class. . . . So that if you ask me, Who will use whom?, I answer, The proletariat."

Thus the choice between machine guns and ballots is not a logical choice, even less a normative one. Never would Allende have accepted a choice between the horns of what for him was not a genuine dilemma. For Allende it was not a question of renouncing one of two means. The real question was how to use both—in alternation, or in succession.

One may wonder if Allende really took these statements seriously. He was highly aware of the advantages a politician like himself might derive from this ambiguous combination of peace-loving humanism ("we wish to create a government that is democratic, national, revolutionary, and popular, because we know socialism cannot impose itself by decree") and "proletarian radicalism" ("Who will use whom? I answer, The proletariat"). Guerrilla warfare and revolutionary violence did not really enter into the universe of this Chilean politician, but the *rhetoric* of the "maximalists" (extremists) was so well-suited to the role he intended to play that he was finally seduced into their glib fallacies.

---

* *Combat*, Sept. 23, 1973.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

During the early '60s, the Chilean Left, like the whole Latin-American Left, lived in a state of both fascination with "revolutionary violence" and rumination over its many defeats. The intellectual Left openly confessed the failure of the various populist movements in which it had at first been involved, but from which it had progressively withdrawn. Yet, of all its failures, this was the least painful for the intelligentsia to acknowledge. It was simply imputed to the weakness of the populist leaders, who were accused of complicity with the enemy, that is, with big capital and imperialism. Moreover, the entire Latin-American Left was spellbound by the Castro episode. As if to exacerbate this fascination, Ché's escapade, which his death metamorphosed into an epic, became a kind of enchanter's wand, with the power of totally inhibiting any skepticism toward "the strategy of guerrilla warfare."

Allende's systematically ambiguous utterances enabled him to join in the condemnation of populist parties (such as the Peruvian Apra, the Venezuelan Acción Democrática, and even the Christian Democratic party). Though he deemed these movements discredited by their "moderation," their "inefficiency," their "accommodating attitude toward imperialism," he did not go so far as to espouse the cause of guerrilla warfare (since his principal aim was to win the elections). Yet, though Allende refrained from using such means, he did not disavow them. Happily, just in time to defend him against allegations of opportunism, a new myth arose, reinforcing that of the *compañero Presidente*: it was the myth of "popular unity," with its "central nervous system unquestionably activated by the working class."

I am not suggesting that Allende's ambivalence was a mere sleight of hand to win over the sympathies of the ultra-Left.* A politician's sincerity is not worth questioning seriously unless he is a master dissembler, something Allende never was. But one wonders if the ambiguities of his position originated in his own personality. He was a very gifted if unexceptional leader, and he had a remarkable sense of compromise, learned in the management of his party's internal affairs and during his parliamentary career. He was a decent man, sincerely liked by his supporters, a man of unquestioned devotion to his cause. The fact that he was a patrician, if not an aristocrat, has not received enough attention; for his social origin gave him unusual authority (especially in his own party), as well as substantial though probably inflated self-confidence. He felt a sincere devotion to "the people," whom he regarded—not unlike others of his class or milieu—somewhat in the British spirit of noblesse oblige.

The relationship of social forces and the distribution of political roles accounts more directly for the difficulties Allende confronted in trying to harness a team as disparate as the Unidad Popular. I see three reasons for the weakness of this left-wing coalition. First, it was a minority. Second, its various groups were so heterogeneous that no strategy acceptable to all its "rival associates" could be outlined. Third, each of these "associates" was so hobbled by its own fantasies that it proved incapable of defining a strategy compatible with those of its partners.

In the presidential election of September 1970 Salvador Allende received only 37 percent of the vote: no candidate received an absolute majority. In accordance with the Chilean constitution, it was up to Chile's Congress to choose a president. The Christian Democrats, on whom Allende's election depended, hesitated for over a month. The incumbent, Eduardo Frei, exerted all his authority to dissuade his Christian Democratic friends from voting for Allende. Tomic, the candidate of the Christian Demo-

* The French text reads *gauchistes,* a term that literally means "leftists" but has a strong critical edge. We have used "ultra-Left" as the closest English equivalent.—Ed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crats who had won third place in the general elections, counseled the opposite course. Eventually Tomic was heeded by the rank and file. But in order to pacify Frei and the right-wing Christian Democrats, Allende wrote a vague letter in which he pledged to respect civil liberties and the constitution. And so Allende became president of the Republic, but only as the champion of a "favored minority," and after having committed himself to a *pacto de caballeros* with the parties of the Center.

It is true that Allende was not the first Chilean president to enter the Moneda palace under such conditions. Jorge Alessandri, a conservative, had done so in similar circumstances in 1958. But Alessandri was not about to challenge anything or anybody. For example, he made no attempt to restore the notorious anti-Communist law on the *Defensa de la Democracía,* which had been abrogated on the eve of the 1958 elections. Thus he respected a tradition of multiparty regimes which holds that the government, *especially if it is a minority government,* does not "go after" the opposition, and does not threaten the persons, goods, or convictions of the ordinary citizens who compose it. But from the very start, Allende played a double role, alternating a "revolutionary" stance with a "legalist" one. The clever—in fact, too clever—amalgamation of these two roles enabled him to pull off a dubious move: by invoking some unabrogated decrees of the 1930s, the President arrogated the right to appoint government representatives, who, at his discretion, could replace the managers of companies—without any prior nationalization of those companies. For a revolutionary government such an action would seem pretty fair play. It could even be called legal, in the literal sense of the word. But it is certainly not hard to see why the Christian Democrats felt they had been swindled. Despite the *pacto de caballeros,* the President had taken all the bedclothes for himself, and hogged the bed as well.

The political interplay within pluralist regimes is regulated by what I shall call the principle of moderation. I do not use the word in a moral sense; it implies here only that the stakes in such a political struggle are limited, and, to use Allende's own words, *socialism cannot be imposed by decree.* True, this principle tends to favor conservative interests, or, more generally, "vested interests," large or small. In effect, it means that these interests may be worn down only by slow and lengthy erosion or by negotiations with the owners, until the latter, through pressure and persuasion, acquiesce in the new situation.

Such procedures, of course, are inconvenient. But Eduardo Frei took them for granted when, in submitting his agrarian reform bill, he agreed to a preliminary constitutional review. Such an approach may also seem too slow, uncertain, and inefficient. But it is indeed imprudent to invoke "legality" when, even in its most narrow sense, that legality contradicts the spirit of a nation's laws and institutions.

Because Allende was restricted by his flirtation with the ultra-Left, his control over his own followers became the key to success. Yet nothing was more divided than this Movement of Popular Unity. Its diversity introduced whole layers of cliques and clienteles into the government, forcing the administrative branches into convulsive immobility. There were also the deep divisions inside the Socialist party, where Allende's influence was counterbalanced by those of the leftists who had found in Altamirano, the Party's secretary-general, a pliant associate. Except on the emotional level, Allende could not really count on any unswerving support even from his own party.

His allies also kept him busy. In addition to the Socialist party, the left-wing coalition included two distinct blocs: the Communists and the ultra-Left. The latter, admittedly rather cursory term refers to several tendencies within the M.I.R. (Miristas, followers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Fidel Castro), including two tiny factions of Christian religious inspiration which were intensely radicalized, the M.A.P.U. and the Izquierda Cristiana. The weight of these two blocs turned out to be very different from what had been assumed: the *power of chaotization* of the ultra-Left rapidly overpowered the Communists. Though I have no proof, my guess is that Salvador Allende and the Communist leaders too had largely underestimated the ultra-leftists' capacity in this respect.

Though numerically insignificant, the ultra-leftists exercised a disproportionate power. Initially the M.I.R. was simply a group of students trying to make contact with "the masses." Mesmerized by the example of Castro and Ché, their tactic, from the beginning of the Allende regime, consisted in outflanking the President, in forcing his hand, in cutting off his avenues of retreat, in blocking all his options for compromise with the bourgeoisie, even of a tactical or temporizing nature—so much that Allende had no alternative but a direct leap forward.

On the whole, the ultra-leftists succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, and it is instructive to discover why. I can make out three principal reasons. The first I have already mentioned: their clever infiltration of the Socialist party. The second was a highly judicious selection of areas in which to work. By infiltrating not only the Socialist party but also such smaller parties as the M.A.P.U. of Jacques Chonchol, they insinuated themselves into posts in the public administration, especially into such politically important branches as Agrarian Reform. Once ensconced, they instigated *jacqueries,* armed the peasants, and made use of all possible means to make life impossible for landowners—including those whose properties lay outside the zone of expropriation laid down by the law. In the cities they used the same tactic: by multiplying the wildcat occupation of enterprises, including the premises of small and sometimes tiny businesses, they believed they were "destroying the power of the bourgeoisie." In fact, they succeeded only in exasperating and frightening portions of the petty bourgeoisie, which otherwise probably would not have been particularly upset by the nationalization of the big foreign businesses or domestic "monopolies."

The ultra-leftists' sheer power to unleash chaos may be explained by a curious combination of paternalism and faith in spontaneity. It is important to realize that their greatest successes were achieved in nonunionized industries. Although in Chile, as elsewhere, such ideologies tend to lump all workers together in the mythic category of "the proletariat," it is more enlightening to distinguish between unionized and nonunionized workers. In Chile organized labor consists of the copper miners, coal miners and the steelworkers; unorganized labor comprises the slum-dwellers (the inhabitants of the *callampas,* which are Chile's rough counterpart to the French *bidonvilles*), and the *inquilinos* or agricultural laborers. There is no need to dwell on the great gulf separating organized from unorganized labor in the matter of jobs, income, way of life, and political participation.

Much of Chilean labor has long been organized. In the large, concentrated industries, the unions were active and efficient in representing the workers' demands; in politics they were, at least verbally, extremely radical. The ties between the unions and the parties of the Left are equally ancient and relatively solid. Meanwhile, the exodus from the countryside brought into the cities a wave of unemployed and relatively unskilled people—constituting for labor unions and political partisans a sort of fishpond in which they hoped to catch new adherents. But the catch was often disappointing, and during the Frei administration the Christian Democrats suffered many a blighted hope in their struggle to "organize" the slums. The Communists and the Socialists obtained somewhat more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

encouraging results. Yet there was still plenty of room for the ultra-Left in its quest for "the masses."

In the countryside, the situation was characterized by two factors. First, there was the erosion of the old political structures and the problematical status of the *patrones,* whose power was now threatened by the agrarian reform. These tendencies, already apparent at the close of the Frei administration, were confirmed by Agriculture Minister Chonchol's precipitous implementation of an agrarian policy far more radical in its objectives and forceful in its means. Second, the *inquilinos* and the *peones* were very poorly organized—when they were organized at all. In 1970 the unions had hardly begun to penetrate to the agricultural wage-earners. Thus, when the traditional structures started to fall apart, a sort of power vacuum was created.

Why did the ultra-Left offensive succeed? First, the ultra-leftists mobilized certain marginal groups who might have found themselves "excluded" even by a progressive government. For example, they saw to it that those peasants who would have been left empty-handed by too strict an interpretation of the law, or who would have fallen entirely outside the jurisdiction of the law, also benefited from the land redistribution program. At the same time, by installing themselves as employees in official bodies, they not only gained impunity in their actions but also assumed the prestige that peasants, in their age-old submissiveness, always grant to representatives of the state. And so the ultra-leftists became the envoys of the *compañero Presidente,* or, as he would have been called in the old days, *su Excelencia.*

What I have referred to as the ultra-leftists' tactical use of "spontaneity" consisted in the perpetual instigatory pressure with which they outflanked official positions. To defend this tactic they pointed—with the complicity or at least acquiescence of the Executive—to the compelling "spontaneity of the masses." What I have called the ultra-leftists' tactical use of "paternalism" consisted in presenting themselves in official roles, thus ensuring the neutrality (or even the active support) of the local authorities as well as the obedience of the peasants. A comparable process took place later in the *poblaciones* and in the *cordon industrial* of the large cities. Here the M.I.R. managed to "show its teeth" by combining a display of force—including the formation in certain districts of illegal "popular tribunals"—with a demonstration of its efficiency in obtaining various concessions (i.e., after the implementation of rationing, a favored position in food allocations).

Why did the Allende government not react to the creation of these parallel centers? First, one must not forget that the Socialist party, or at least its more turbulent factions, wanted to avoid at all cost a break with the M.I.R. A confrontation with the M.I.R. would have threatened to splinter the President's own party, a grave risk indeed considering the role of the Socialists in the governing coalition. Second, one must allow for the President's repugnance to "shed blood" —or even run the risk of shedding it. There is also an ingenious Machiavellian scheme I heard aired on several occasions: the pressure of the M.I.R. would enable the government to expose the weakness of the "paper tigers of the bourgeoisie," while at the same time the occupation of businesses by the M.I.R. would extend the sector of socially controlled property. In any case, the President seems never to have seriously considered the option of trying to dissuade *los muchachos* (the boys).

Allende's own postures had already made him their captive. In 1936 Léon Blum took great pains to indicate that his government would honestly take into account the interests of the middle class. Both Blum and the Communist leaders were preoccupied with surmounting a crisis, especially with repelling fascism. Allende's approach was the opposite: had he not proclaimed that "the era of popular fronts is over"? Thus the M.I.R.-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inspired "revolutionary troops" who were occupying farms and businesses, and who were organizing popular tribunals, suddenly discovered that they had become a kind of sacrosanct vanguard.

If the ultra-leftists managed to make the utmost use of their capacity to unleash chaos, the Communists revealed an astoundingly limited capacity for tactics and strategy. The Chilean Communist party had a long tradition, a solid organization, and well-tested cadres. But it was also severely handicapped, a fact neglected by those commentators who, at the time of Allende's election, envisaged a Communist take-over as the likely conclusion.

Two things were clear. First, the international situation in 1970 discouraged the Chilean Communists from any initiative that might have endangered Soviet-American relations. Moreover, the domestic situation in Chile greatly reduced the Communists' freedom of movement. For the big unions—the copper miners in particular—were highly aware of their role as protectors of a special interest, geared to what Americans call bread-and-butter issues. Thus the CP plank calling for the nationalization of the mines was not always very popular. The unions, which had long ago imposed relatively favorable contracts on the mining companies, were apprehensive, and not without reason, that the Chilean government might turn out to be a worse boss than the capitalist *gringo*. Besides, the CP was not alone in the labor field: not only were the Socialists there, but in many unions the Christian Democrats too were waging an often successful campaign to outflank both Communists and Socialists. The Christian Democrats were often in the forefront, not only of those defending the workers' immediate interests, but also of those championing claims for genuine "autonomy" in the management of nationalized industries.

The pluralism of parties and unions, and the vehement rivalry within the unions between leaders representing opposing ideologies, seems to have imposed on the Communists an essentially defensive mentality. The CP defended all nationalizations but wherever possible discouraged the occupation of lands or factories. Thus the CP constantly reminded the workers, the copper miners in particular, of the need for industrial discipline. It was disposed to take the same "responsible" attitude that was adopted by their French and Italian colleagues in the years after the European Liberation: "loyally" supporting the government and mobilizing their rank and file to acclaim the *campañero Presidente*. Of course, the Communists were not simply wasting their time: they were advancing their pawns, infiltrating, colonizing. But according to all evidence, at no point during the Allende period did they think of seizing power and monopolizing it by means of a *coup d'état*.

Even had they weighed such a course, two obstacles would have discouraged them. (1) The army had escaped their influence. Not only could they not rely on its aid, but they might arouse its open hostility in the event of an armed contest. (2) More important, the immense process of destabilization following the advent of Allende both embarrassed and entrammeled the Communists. Still anxious to behave like "responsible" partners, they also recognized the danger of being eclipsed by the demagoguery of their "allies." Caught in a vise between the provocations of the ultra-Left and the usual suspicions and imputations of the Right (which had never ceased denouncing them as the principal enemy), they were disposed simply to minimize their losses and avoid the worst.

The process of destabilization, which began early in 1971, has sometimes been reduced to a mere inflationary spiral. Everyone knows that Chile could give the whole world lessons on inflation. But the excep-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional violence of this phenomenon during the Allende administration calls for special explanations. I can see four: the policy of economic stimulation sponsored by the government in 1970, the subsistence crisis brought on by the agrarian reform, the dislocation of the industrial economy, and the crisis in foreign payments.

When M. Mitterand confidently hailed "the Chilean road to socialism," the Allende government's "stimulation" of the Chilean economy was still in its earliest phase, which in fact was very promising. Inflation was still in the fizzy or frothy stage. The government's experts—honest economists for the most part—had gained their professional experience not in business management or administrative positions, but as officials of the C.E.P.A.L. or as planners in the C.O.R.F.O.* At the end of Frei's administration, they had found the Chilean economy in the throes of serious underemployment. This, aside from its structural causes, had resulted from the overpayments the Chilean government, deeply in debt, was making in order to regain its credit abroad. Allende's ministry of economics, trying to make full use of the nation's fallow productive capabilities, adopted a policy of cheap money, massive salary raises, and public spending. The results were a remarkable takeoff in industrial production—which rose 7 percent in fiscal 1971, reduced unemployment, depleted monetary reserves—and a rise in the real earnings of the least privileged social categories. These brilliant results were achieved by allowing a 10 percent inflationary price hike for the year—an exceptionally good bargain for Chile.

But this "expansion of stability" did not last more than a year. Very soon the destabilization factors I have mentioned (accelerated agrarian reform, wildcat nationalizations) derailed the whole process, reinforcing the potentially inflationary effect of the economic program. Consequently, the absence of compensatory measures, designed to withhold from other social categories the equivalent of the purchasing power distributed by the government—plus additional income created by salary raises, the rise in employment, and deficits sustained both by the state and its nationalized enterprises—precipitated an avalanche of inflated purchasing power onto a market in which goods were already growing scarce.

A crisis in the production of subsistence commodities often accompanies agrarian reforms. But in the Chilean case the reduction of agricultural production occasioned by the disorder and violence in the countryside was brutally aggravated by the deterioration of monetary mechanisms. The rapid depreciation of money is never an incentive to part cheaply with real goods; that was even less the case when, after the introduction of rationing, it became obvious that the black market offered producers much better remuneration than the official market. Hence it was necessary to import increasing quantities of foodstuffs, whose cost mounted as the state's monetary reserves were depleted.

The dislocation of the industrial economy pursued a more complicated path, but soon the same fatal dynamics emerged. Industrial conditions were rapidly aggravated by "workers' collectives" whose erratic appearance in sectors for which no nationalization had been projected produced three kinds of effects. (1) Owners who had been expelled, dispossessed, or threatened began to stop investing; this was clear by 1972, when practically all investment came from the public sector. (2) Business management followed a logic neither of profit nor of a planned economy; the large deficits that resulted were dumped squarely in the lap of the state, which once again proceeded to finance its operations with fiat money. (3) At length the public sector, perpetually overburdened with a collection of disparate enterprises of ill-defined status

* C.E.P.A.L.: Comisión Economica para America Latina (a U.N. body). C.O.R.F.O.: Corporación de Fomento: a government agency responsible for allocating public and private money to industrial development programs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—at once "self-managing" and government-subsidized—eluded all rational administration.

To the food crisis and the dislocation of the industrial machine were added the combined effects of the foreign-exchange crisis. The latter had several sources. First, the great domestic and foreign-based corporations had, with the coming of Allende, "taken certain precautions." Also, a whole group of lower- and middle-range industrialists, threatened by wholesale nationalizations, had tried to liquidize their assets and convert them into money or foreign currency. From the start, the government had only the feeblest methods for handling this situation. Second, in the balance of trade, income from the export of copper had leveled off or dropped, whereas expenditures for the import of foodstuffs rose sharply. As far as capital investment was concerned, the Chilean government was still bogged down in a dispute with the foreign companies it had nationalized (and which it refused in principle to indemnify), and it was still committed to an intransigeant position concerning the repayment and consolidation of its outstanding national debt. These factors hardly encouraged the arrival of new finance capital.

The Chilean inflation was thus the outcome of a struggle between the following main contestants in the political arena: the government, which had failed to foresee the disastrous potential effects, not only of its release of artificial and inflationary purchasing power on a seller's market, but also of its ill-advised nationalization policy and its recalcitrance toward its creditors; the landowners, who were "hoarding" their produce; the industrial entrepreneurs, who were halting investment; and last, the unions, which, willy-nilly, had disrupted the management of business concerns. The galloping inflation was supremely indicative of the accelerated dislocation of all social mechanisms.

As early as October 1972, the date of the first truckers' strike, Allende was doomed. The paralysis of production and trade, the progressive deterioration of elementary social functions, and the frustration of the most trivial expectations had become insufferable to greater and greater sections of the middle class. The first "symphony of pots and pans" (anti-Allende demonstrations of housewives), in late 1971, was labeled a "fascist provocation." This reassuring explanation fooled fewer and fewer people as it was becoming more and more difficult to procure food. There is no evidence that the urban middle class was longing for a helmeted and booted savior. What actually prevailed was a confused but painful feeling that "this cannot go on." The public mood was best summarized by the joke that in 1971 circulated in the Chilean slums: *Este es un gobierno de mierda pero es nuestro gobierno.* ("It's a shitty government, but it's our government.")

In this great stampede, the government lost all hold on the organs of state, even though the generals still proclaimed themselves loyal constitutionalists. Allende soon found himself with only two possible options, and both required the army's support.

(1) A newly galvanized "Popular Unity" movement might reimpose its grip on the economy. But to put the economy back on its feet presupposed a minimum of industrial discipline, and plentiful enough deliveries of consumer goods to dry up the black market. Only then could a reasonable solution be proposed for the problem of the exchange rate and the flight of capital. All available evidence indicates that the Communist party gave its support or at least tacit approval to such a policy. But by the end of 1972, this option had become impossible. The Communist party had less and less control over the only Chilean labor federation, the C.U.T.Ch., which had virtually been shattered under the cross fire of ultra-leftist and Christian Democratic demagoguery.

(2) Allende could try to seek an entente with the parliamentary majority, or at least

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the Christian Democrats. The relationship between the Christian Democracy and the Unidad Popular was complex and elusive. At first glance, one might have thought that they were diametrically opposed: the Chilean Left was secular and "Marxist," while the Christian Democrats denounced "atheistic materialism" and "Communist oppression." Yet the Christian Democratic leaders and those of Unidad Popular shared a "philosophy" of development and progress. They were in agreement on the principal articles of the *desarollista* (development) catechism as it had been elaborated in the C.E.P.A.L. The three principal articles of this creed were agrarian reform, industrialization, and, above all, the end of dependence on foreign interests. But these recommendations were too vague to hold the *desarollistas* together once they began to translate them into specific directives. Agrarian reform—granted. But how fast should the expropriations take place? In what way would the owners be indemnified? How would the new agricultural cultivation be run? Industrialization—fine. But should it be left in the hands of the Chilean bourgeoisie? Or would it be better to nationalize industry, or to place it under state control, or to organize it in cooperatives? Could the end of dependence be achieved by the expropriation of all foreign companies? And should this expropriation be accompanied by indemnities?

Whatever the divergences and confusions, many partisans of Frei and especially of Tomic had long felt closer to Allende than to the conservative Jorge Alessandri and his *momios.** But the Chilean Christian Democratic party is characterized by an ambiguity also found in many of its sister parties: its leaders lean more to the Left than its constituents. Yet their "social" orientation did not stop them from being highly wary of the Communists. Any alliance of a "popular front" type put the Christian Democrats on red alert; this endemic suspiciousness was probably behind Frei's effort in 1970 to dissuade his colleagues from giving Allende the necessary congressional votes for his election. Frei was fearful of an outright Communist takeover, rather than of leftist subversion.

Was negotiation still possible between Frei and Allende in 1972? Could the President of the Republic have come to terms with Congress to keep his ship from going down? Could they not simply have agreed on a fixed list of nationalized firms, agreeing to refrain from further nationalizations or "interventions" by pure executive decree (for the latter had served as an implicit endorsement of the fantasy politics behind the occupations carried out by the M.I.R.-manipulated "workers' collectives")? Had these conditions been met, it might have been possible to launch (with the necessary foreign assistance) a stabilization plan to put the Chilean economy back on the right track.

In this way Allende might have made the fullest use of his mandate, not in the maximalist grand style perhaps, but more prosaically, as a "lame duck," or rather, to use the appropriate Spanish saying: *entrada a caballo, salida en burro* ("Came in on a horse, went out on an ass").

The durability of such an arrangement is debatable; it is certain that it was never achieved. The Communists were not against it. Everything suggests that they urged the President to seek it. It was in his own party that Allende encountered really die-hard resistance to this policy. For their part, the Christian Democrats were starting to balk. As the situation deteriorated, Eduardo Frei's hard-line supporters also stiffened their terms. The prospect of jumping into a hopelessly leaky boat, or tossing a life-saver to a drowning enemy, is never terribly appealing. Moreover, the extreme polarization rendered the position of a centrist party, like that of the Christian Democrats, increasingly difficult.

---

* *Momios:* play of words on *momio* (meager, insubstantial) and *momia* (mummy).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

KATYA GILDEN, author of two novels, *Between the Hills and the Sea* (1971) and *Hurry Sundown* (1965), is at work on a new book.

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI, the eminent Polish philosopher, teaches at Oxford University in England. Among his works, available in English, are *Toward a Marxist Humanism* (1968), *The Alienation of Reason: A History of Positive Thought* (1968), and *Marxism and Beyond* (1969). His essay in this issue is translated, with permission, from the German version, which appeared in the journal *Merkur,* August 1972.

FRANK MARQUART, now retired, lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he writes his memoirs and does volunteer work for the Boycott Committee of the United Farm Workers.

MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV, the well-known Yugoslav writer, lives in his homeland, where his work has not been published for some time. This report is reprinted, with permission, from the English magazine *Index*, published at 35 Bow Street, London, W.C.2.

RICHARD ROBBINS, who teaches sociology at the University of Massachusetts–Boston, is at work on a biography of the sociologist Charles S. Johnson.

GUS TYLER is assistant president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Mr. Tyler writes a nationally syndicated column and is the author of *Labor in the Metropolis* (1972), *The Political Imperative: The Corporate Character of Unions* (1968), and *The Labor Revolution* (1967). His article is reprinted, with permission and in slightly abbreviated form, from the *Montclair Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities,* Summer 1973.

Conjunctions and Disjunctions by Octavio Paz

TRANSLATED BY HELEN R. LANE,
Winner of the 1974 National Book Award for translation

A RICHARD SEAVER BOOK
$7.95

One of the major poets and thinkers of our time examines the human condition and comes up with a fascinating and provocative exploration of man's duality. He speaks of what joins together and what separates. Of things analogous and opposite. Of the union and disunion of two signs: "body" and "non-body." Of violence and rebellion. Of materialism, capitalism and communism. Of science and technology.

"Illuminating....A fine companion volume to other works by Paz."
—*Library Journal*

THE VIKING PRESS
625 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISSENT is a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

dissent

SUMMER 1974

EDITOR: Irving Howe

MANAGING EDITOR:
Edith Tarcov

EDITORIAL BOARD:
Jervis Anderson, Joseph Buttinger, David Bensman, David Bromwich, Joseph Clark, Emanuel Geltman, Lewis Coser, Rose Laub Coser, Michael Harrington, Robert Heilbroner, Murray Hausknecht, Erazim Kohák, Jeremy Larner, Robert Lekachman, Norman Mailer, Deborah Meier, Henry Pachter, Martin Peretz, Stanley Plastrik, Jack Rader, Bernard Rosenberg, Meyer Schapiro, Brendan Sexton, Patricia Cayo Sexton, David Spitz, Michael Walzer, Dennis H. Wrong

ART DIRECTION:
Burton Wenk

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

365 MELTING DOWN THE PLASTIC MAN
by Irving Howe

367 THE SHAH OF IRAN, IS HE A MARXIST?
by Henry Pachter

370 YUGOSLAVIA—THE APPROACHING STORM
by Mihajlo Mihajlov

372 MANIACS AND MURDER *by I.H.*

ARTICLES

374 FREEDOM AND FREEDOMS
by Leszek Kolakowski

380 WORKERS (FEMALE) ARISE!
by Patricia Cayo Sexton

396 AL SHANKER AND I
by David Selden

402 CHILE: WHY ALLENDE FELL
by François Bourricaud

415 LEND-LEASE COMES TO A SOVIET CAMP: A SAMIZDAT STORY *by Varlam Shalamov*

421 FROM A LABOR JOURNAL
by Frank Marquart

431 ON LIMITS OF "CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY"
by Gus Tyler

NOTEBOOK

440 SOCIALISM & THE WELFARE STATE
by Erazim Kohák

443 DÉTENTE—SHADOW OR SUBSTANCE?
by Joseph Clark

BOOKS

447 REVIEWS *by Henry Pachter, Joseph Buttinger, Katya Gilden, and Richard Robbins*

461 LETTERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Irving Howe

Melting Down the Plastic Man

We should have known that when definitive word came to be spoken about Richard Nixon, it would be from the pen of Art Buchwald. In one of his recent skits Buchwald shows "a former White House aide" called "Deep Toes," offering a sensational news bit in "an abandoned garage in Chevy Chase." What "Deep Toes" reveals is that there was never a difference between the Old Nixon and the New Nixon.

The New Nixon whom we saw from 1969 to 1971 "was the Old Nixon with makeup on. We dyed his hair, powdered his cheeks and put him in new suits. We had everybody fooled."

Whose idea was it to put out the story that there was a New Nixon?

"Chuck Colson and John Dean," continues Deep Toes, "cooked it up between them. They figured if they were going to resort to a lot of dirty stuff in Nixon's second term, it would be better to do it in the name of the New Nixon rather than the Old Nixon. You see people would have been very wary if they thought the Old Nixon was running for office."

Keen words, "Deep Toes." But keen as they are, they hardly tell us anything that, say, Helen Gahagan Douglas couldn't have told us all along, since Nixon defeated her for Congress in a dirty California election. Nor did it take library research to know what Richard Nixon had always been, to remember his complicity with McCarthyism and his natural affinity for the most benighted and vulgar politics. It only took a willingness to remember.

That is why there's more than a drop of hypocrisy in the sudden outpouring of "moral revulsion" that followed the release of the transcripts. Does anyone propose to tell us that Senator Hugh Scott didn't really know what Nixon was? And for that matter, the distinguished intellectuals who just before the last election came out with a full-page ad in the *New York Times* supporting Nixon on the ground that he was "prudent"—they too were old enough to have witnessed the early rise of Richard Nixon.

HE WAS MADE OF PLASTIC, and under the heat of revelation, it melted away. There is a point of view—far from adequate to the complexities of our politics, but not to be dismissed either—which sees the whole political process as little more than a public-relations stunt, an elaborate concoction of a pseudo-personality by skilled operators who try to gauge which sociopsychic needs are strongest at a given moment and then proceed to manufacture a candidate to satisfy them. For this reductive view of things, Richard Nixon is the best argument. If ever a candidate was manufactured, it was Nixon. The deep unreality reflective people have felt about him, the sense that there was *no one there* but a puffy concoction, may indeed be the basis for his success. Nixon had been put together to appeal to everything inauthentic in American life, every wish to evade social realities and responsibilities, every impulse to find ways of scuttling and sabotaging the welfare state without being explicit about it, and every stubborn residue of a mindless anti-Communism that could be tapped with a few phrases.

It was a neat composition while it lasted, and its manufacturers can hardly be blamed that it didn't last. Once the composition melted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make their power superior to that of others. They only invite envy. Historically they are born dead. The recent surge of nationalism, the expropriations and so-called nationalizations, the establishment of independent political units, the formation of cartels for the exploitation of the consuming countries—all this some see as the new revolt of the masses, the insurrection of the world's poor and disinherited against dependence. To some extent this is so. But just as the Great Revolution of the Sansculottes did not bring to power the third estate as a whole but only the bourgeoisie, so the national revolutions of our time have brought to power not those who are hungry and destitute but their managers and functionaries, Djilas's "new class."

The revolution has not given the resources of the earth to the peoples of all countries but only to the managers who are able to identify their own position with the cause of a nation, especially the nation on whose soil the facilities happen to be located. These owner-nationalists, whose power is based on territorial sovereignty, now are locked in a bitter fight against the multinational corporations whose power is not tied to any particular nation. It is a repetition, of sorts, of the old rivalry between conservative protectionist landowners and cosmopolitan laissez-faire traders and industrialists. One need not decide which of these two forms of exploitation is more and which less moral; they are both parasitical, neither is creative. The nationalist form may actually develop some forces of production in underdeveloped countries where the economy still has to "catch up" with the more advanced types of industrialism. The cosmopolitan form may, thanks to its size and its all-embracing organization, actually promote technological advances in its subordinate units. But neither is productive except in its own area of activity—the refinement of codes of ownership and the development of management techniques permitting the growth of the organization without necessarily contributing to the growth of production, or to the improving of goods and services that fill genuine consumer needs.

The Special Assembly also saw the nauseating spectacle of the Western governments fighting, not to protect the interests of their consumer populations but the Transnational Corporations, actually yielding on important points of international organization in return for the deletion, in the final resolution, of a clause that would have placed expropriation under the exclusive jurisdiction of the expropriating country. Since the transnational corporations have become a symbol of neocolonial domination, it would be better to nationalize them in all countries. Only then would it be possible to negotiate about the establishment of true international agencies for the management and distribution of the world's resources in the interests of all nations.

Socialists, however, cannot be satisfied with nationalization and with international raw-materials cartels. There was a time when such measures looked like a help either to the well-being or to the ego of some new countries. This is no longer the case. Underdeveloped countries buy weapons, build nuclear bombs, and use economic monopolies for political purposes. Whether state-owned or private, their new organizations are essentially capitalistic.

I believe it is inevitable that these big organizations will both fight each other and cooperate with each other; and hence we shall have stagnation, monopoly, cartelization, distribution of the advantages of the system among those who are in, and new bars against those who are out. This will lead to a system of

Announcing—

A Special Fall Issue:

ON THE NEW AMERICAN SITUATION

Contributors:

Michael Harrington
John Herling
Robert Lekachman
Herman P. Miller
Gus Tyler
Daniel Yankelovich

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munist dictatorship in Yugoslavia after the Second World War was nevertheless successfully carried out, and but for the conflict with Stalin, Yugoslavia would not now be very different from Bulgaria or Hungary. Today, however, Yugoslavia lacks the most important and decisive prerequisite for the reintroduction of an absolute totalitarian party monopoly, and that is, a fanatical and disciplined party.

During recent decades and especially over the last two years, both the so-called liberals and the bureaucrats, the nationalists and the technocrats, in fact, all those who have at any time shown a certain degree of independence and vitality, have been purged from the party, and new recruitment has been made from a working-class environment. But these are people remote from any fanaticism, who inevitably gravitate in the direction of the very "liberals" who were previously purged.

The years of relative freedom, when there was an almost independent press and when all the contemporary Western thinkers, writers, and sociologists were translated, have had their effect. So too has the fact that a million Yugoslav workers (one quarter of all the workers in the country) live in Western Europe and can see the advantages of the democratic system. Interminable speeches on the introduction of a party dictatorship in the interest of workers' self-government, in view of the economic crisis and the agricultural impasse, no longer arouse anybody's enthusiasm. The only reaction of the intelligentsia to the reestablishment of party committees with the intention of preserving Marxist ideological purity in literature, theater, cinema, music, and art, is a contemptuous smile.

A campaign against religious influences has been initiated, a compulsory two-year course in Marxism was introduced into institutes of higher education, and there are calls for the dismissal of some very distinguished university professors connected with the journal *Praxis*—professors who are the "last of the Mohicans" of Marxist thought—as opposed to party dogmatism—in the Communist world. It is clear to everybody, of course, that this persecution has nothing to do with Marxism; it is part of the fight against all manifestations of dissidence.

The press, now under very heavy pressure from the party, daily publishes reports of party meetings at which the courts and the police are called upon to apply "revolutionary" and not "formal" legality in the struggle against the "class enemy." However, judges do not seem particularly keen to take this advice, for two reasons: first, no one is sure that the new totalitarianization will succeed or that he will not be required at some future time to account for his violation of "formal" legality; and second, no opposition class has physically existed in Yugoslavia for a quarter of a century now, unless one counts the permanent party oligarchy termed by Djilas the "new class."

Of course, paragraphs 146 and 147 of the new, fifth postwar Constitution, which aims to consolidate the new "revolutionary course," guarantee freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and of political organizations. But, unfortunately, these freedoms have so far remained mere words on paper as they did in the corresponding paragraphs (39 and 40) of the old Constitution. Now, however, parliamentary deputies are to be replaced by deputies who have no immunity, are elected "at factory floor level" (this in conditions of a total party monopoly), and can be promptly relieved if they make any attempt to act independently, something that was rather difficult to do to the [old] deputies and has caused the party a great deal of trouble over the last few years.

Occasionally the fight against dissidence of any kind adopts sheer Stalinist tactics and the same old formulas begin to reappear: not to be a Marxist is synonymous with betrayal of the fatherland and participation in a "special war of espionage" directed against Yugoslavia. Activities for which the Pulitzer Prize is awarded in the United States are referred to as "ideological sabotage" and political crime.

DISREGARDING the high-flown, monotonous incantations of the party, one can truthfully say that an ominous quiet has fallen on Yugoslav society. A stillness before the storm.

An unexpected and certainly a positive result of all this, though it has come about in a negative way, is that, for the first time in several decades, the democratic opposition forces of all the Yugoslav peoples are reaching a state of total psychological unity. The envy with which Yugoslav citizens read about the restora-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> groups like the SLA see themselves as substitutes for the missing mass organizations. The very presence of a mass movement acts as a restraint on destructive violence, since it creates a moral community for people in revolt.

Well, there's a portion of truth in that, though I think it's time murderous gangs like SLA no longer be considered as merely "distorted" expressions of legitimate discontent but also as pathological phenomena which in many respects are not very different from fascism. But leave that aside, and turn to the question of "a mass movement." Perhaps it's true that "a mass movement" of the Left would act as a brake on SLA-type *kamikaze* gangs (though it seems not to have been true in Chile recently, and in Germany during the '20s it wasn't true, either). But even if we grant the *Ramparts* argument, all that it says is that under certain *conditions* SLA adventurism might not flourish; it is not yet giving a *reason* for opposing such methods, or it is not yet giving a reason that goes beyond the merely tactical or expedient (terrorism calls down the cops, it is counterproductive, etc.).

What is the ground for believing, after the torment and shambles of 20th-century history, that "a mass movement" would *necessarily* be superior in its moral character to a handful of desperadoes? *Ramparts* itself quotes "one former New Left activist" who asks the pertinent questions, "Do we really believe every Vietnamese village chief cut down by the NLF deserved to die? Have we such supreme faith in the Cuban government that we can state categorically its revolutionary firing squads were never aimed in the wrong direction?"

And all *Ramparts* can answer is that "the Cuban Government and the NLF are legitimized by mass movements numbering millions of supporters, by political organs, by legal codes which are enforced and respected . . . by courts of justice and judicial review procedures to which military functionaries are responsible. . . ." It is not a very strong answer, since, for one thing, the rightness or wrongness of NLF and Cuban executions, about which the "former New Left activists" asks, is in no way dependent on whether "millions" support the agencies undertaking those executions. And as for their "legitimacy," when, editors of *Ramparts* please tell us, was the last time the Cuban government submitted itself to a free election, so that the "millions" could express their judgment of its conduct?

The *Ramparts* editors have taken a significant step away from the arrogant elitism, the usurpation by gangs of declassed and deranged maniacs of the power of "the people," which has characterized the worst segment of the New Left. But Ramparts has not thought through the issue of the moral appropriateness of violence and/or terrorism in a democratic society. So long as *Ramparts* can be published, Bobby Seale run for mayor of Oakland, demonstrators cry freely that "the bum" should be thrown out of the White House, political movements of opposition organize and function—so long as we live in a democracy, and yes, an imperfect, debased, vulgarized, manipulated democracy, then, no private group, tiny or not-so-tiny, has the right to appoint itself prosecutor, judge, and executor of violence.

Ramparts is rightly appalled at the destructiveness and self-destructiveness of SLA, but finally the case against it and its half-shamed apologists cannot be made short of a principled defense of democracy.

The only group that seems to have emerged from the California mess with any honor or self-respect is Cesar Chavez's farm workers' union, which refused to participate in the "food distribution" program decreed by Patricia Hearst's kidnappers. It refused on the principled ground that it wanted no part of a program enforced through terrorism. As for the rest—

Damn all those mindless "theoreticians," the 30-day wonders who came up with such rock-headed notions as "liberal fascism," and thereby prepared the way for the Cinques! Damn any enraged witless "radical"—black or white, young or old, rich or poor—who dares pump bullets into another human being because of a delusionary doubling with "the people"! Damn the brutal cops waiting for a chance to kill the killers but not ready to wait a few hours in the hope they might surrender! Damn all these linked murderers and maniacs who debase politics and threaten freedom!

—I. H. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

universality of the term should not be an occasion to bemoan human frivolity in the use of language. On the contrary, it is testimony to the magical power of the word. The word "freedom" enjoys such widespread applicability because throughout history it has hardly ever been opposed *under that name;* and on the occasions when that was done, the freedom that was being abrogated was declared to be a sham or a fraud, and it was to be superseded—so it was claimed—by a true, genuine, a deeper or higher form of freedom. Because of the magical force of the word, freedom can be attacked only in the name of a "greater" freedom. Hardly any political movement, ideology, or doctrine can do without the word "freedom" in its verbal arsenal. Deplorable as it may be, thanks to the magical power of the word, anyone claiming to "fight for freedom" is assumed to be "fighting for something"—in other words, it is a meaningless claim.

But we should not leave it at that. To do so would mean that we condone the irresponsible use of the word, that we acquiesce in all the ideological sophistries which can be based on the fact that, twist as we may the word "freedom," it always retains, within its sphere of associations, this central meaning: freedom amounts to the range of decisions that a social organization leaves to the individual.

The concept of freedom, therefore, is devoid of any meaning with respect to the imaginary "state of nature" that has preoccupied the philosophers of the *contrat social.* Or, to put it differently: the concept assumes meaning only when it is contrasted to law, i.e., as *limited freedom.* Inherent in the idea of freedom is the existence of something that is the opposite of freedom—the restrictions that are an inevitable part of all forms of social life. The only freedom we are familiar with is limited freedom, insofar as it is a characteristic of social life and constitutes itself in the realm of law as a sphere of *juridical irrelevance*—that is to say, a sphere in which the law claims no jurisdiction.

This very general characterization, which follows the traditional doctrine of 18th-century liberalism, tells us nothing that would enable us to determine under which conditions which sphere of freedom is either possible or desirable. Still, this characterization is not completely without merit, since it assumes that unlimited freedom is not possible and that the antagonistic interests requiring regulation by law represent a necessary part of social life.

As we know, this view of freedom was attacked by various socialist ideologies, particularly by Marxian social philosophy. Marx believed that the classical formulas of the Great Revolution, which defined freedom as the right to act free from all restraints within the limits of not doing harm to other people, presupposed a society in which individuals saw themselves as free-floating atoms pursuing selfish goals, as members of an abstract, "alienated" community, in the form of the state and of laws, one which would perforce limit or minimize the conflict of opposing interests. But for Marx this concept of freedom was the expression of a specific early-bourgeois ideal of free trade and free enterprise. Such freedom, as it were, perpetuates the antagonistic nature of human interests by hypostatizing it as a natural condition and certainly does not assure *positive* freedom—i.e., a condition offering the individual the social base that permits him to develop his potential in harmony with (instead of against) the general welfare.

But let us examine the assumptions of this critique. Quite obviously the individuals who make up bourgeois society are not atoms in the sense that all aspects of their lives are independent of social conditions. However, no liberal philosophy comprised such an "atomistic" model of society, nor did it require one. All models assumed that conflicts of interest constituted an irremovable part

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vis-à-vis the social organism as a whole. The worst thing we could do in the face of this situation is to weigh down the idea of "freedom" with ever new and heavier burdens that would ultimately overwhelm the simple meaning of the word and reduce it to insignificance.

If the term "formal freedom" means the area of decisions left to the individual by the social organization and the law, then it means simply "freedom"; there is no other freedom. Those who employ the phrase "formal freedom" as a pretext to recommend another better more humane one, instead of the merely "formal" one, are simply, with a verbal sleight-of-hand, using deception to destroy freedom.

The question of whether freedom is a value is completely divorced from the philosophical debate over freedom of will and determinism. Like all questions dealing with ends in themselves, i.e., with values pure and simple, this question cannot be solved by scientific methods. We can imagine a society in which the value of freedom is not recognized at all. And we can't rule out the possibility that in the future man might be able to exist without a will of his own, as a tool of despots. Fortunately, past experience does not support such visions of the future. The sophistries which intend to rob the term of its accepted meaning involuntarily pay homage to the idea of freedom. By their deceptions its enemies concede that freedom is man's most precious possession and therefore cannot be fought under its right name. Like air, it is a treasure of which we are barely aware as long as we are not deprived of it.

Translated by JEAN STEINBERG □

CONTREPOINT

Revue trimestrielle d'analyse et de réflexion

A notamment publié dans ses derniers numéros:

NO. 12:
Alexandre Soljenitsyne: **L'hypocrisie de l'Occident**
François Bourricaud: **L'engrènage chilien**
Jean Plumyène: **Le retour du "bon sauvage"?**

NO. 13:
Daniel Bell: **Les contradictions culturelles du capitalisme**
Raymond Aron: **"Lectures" de Pareto**
Marc Fumaroli: **Sur Bergmann**

NO. 14:
Jean Laloy: **"L'archipel Goulag: un des livres du siècle**
Un inédit d'*Andréi Amalrik:* Les correspondants de presse étrangers, à Moscou.
Alain Besançon: **Présent soviétique et passé russe**
François Fejto: **Un itinéraire d'historien**
Alfred Fabre-Luce: **Bilan de la "détente".**
Et des textes de: Philippe Aries, Pierre Boulez, Stanley Hoffman etc.

BON DE COMMANDE

Je commande le n ° (chaque numéro 6 $)
Je m'abonne pour un an (quatre numéros: 20 $)
NOM: .....
ADRESSE: .....

Renvoyer à *CONTREPOINT*, 1 rue du Mail, 75002 PARIS, FRANCE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women are much more likely to be clerical workers than anything else. More than one woman in three is a clerical worker. Only one woman in six is a blue-collar worker and those who are, work as "operatives" rather than "craftsmen." Indeed, the only large occupational group women have not cracked is that of "craftsmen." More women are farm workers (501,000) than craftsmen (360,000). Yet more men work in crafts than in any other occupational group (over 10 million). Except for elite jobs, the skilled trades remain the major male fortress.

About twice as many men as women are managers and administrators, the best-paying occupational group. About the same proportion of women as men are in "professional and technical occupations." As of now, the best opportunities for women are in these professional and technical jobs. More of these jobs are open to them, and women make a higher proportion of the average male salary (69 percent) than in other occupations. Also, two of the major hurdles to the upgrading of women are not present here: requirements of physical strength and the need to "boss" other employees.

The profile of the average woman worker has changed considerably. In the 1920s it was that of a young (average age 28), single, factory worker or clerk. Now it is that of an older (38) married woman working in a variety of jobs. If employment holds up, the participation of women in the labor force will continue to increase. Women will have smaller families, more time, more educational and job opportunities. There will also be more jobs they can do. They may even become craftsmen, as new technologies develop and as the performance of many jobs requires less physical strength.

For the great mass of women workers, economic upgrading can come through three main routes: (1) unionization; (2) upgrading and promotion on the jobs; (3) training for other jobs, in professional and technical occupations.

I CLUW

TO SEE what progress women workers were making along these routes, I attended the March 1974 founding convention of CLUW (the Coalition of Labor Union Women) in Chicago. It was probably the largest labor convention ever held, in all history. And almost nobody there but us women. While conventions (like fads) come and go, the significance of this one may long linger on.

About 600 delegates were expected when the meeting was planned a year earlier. But a few months before the gathering, registrations rose to 1,500. The arrangements committee was in shock. There was no place to seat, let alone sleep, so many people.

On the convention's opening morning the convenors (torn between joy and terror) announced that 2,100 delegates had registered. By afternoon, the figure had risen to over 3,200! Even the UAW, whose conventions are probably bigger than any other union's, draws only 2,500 tops.

Admission to the meetings required proof of union membership. Nobody could get in without a union card. Delegates came from 58 unions and every part of the country. Many paid their own way. Large numbers came from the AFSCME (State, County, and Municipal Workers), the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the American Federation of Teachers. Also strongly present were the IAM (Machinists), Typographers, Service Employees, Government Employees, Postal Workers, ILG (Ladies' Garments), Steelworkers. Communications Workers, Amalgamated Meat Cutters, Hotel and Restaurant Workers, Bakers and Confectioners, IUE (Electrical), and Teamsters. Thirty delegates came from the Newspaper Guild. There were also women (a few) from the Boilermakers and the Carpenters. The construction trades, however, were noted for their absence.*

* The officers elected at the meeting give us an idea of the range of major participants. Olga Madar of the UAW was elected president, and Addie Wyatt

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and that they support most of the aims, but not the tactics, of the women's liberation movement. Most of these women are no longer the "captives" of family and tradition they once felt they were. They think women should be free to choose careers outside the home, and about a third said they would not choose homemaking if they had to do it again. Many feel that the women's liberation movement belittles the role of homemaker too much. Many had worked outside the home and had not liked it. But they are more interested now than ever in community, jobs, the larger world. More of them want smaller families; of those in their early twenties, 71 percent said they will have no more than two children. The small family tends to free the housewife. As consumers, they are more interested in things for themselves, especially labor-saving devices that free their time. They are less interested in products that merely help them serve their families.

Setting the Tone

OPENING THE CONVENTION, beautiful and black Addie Wyatt, director of women's activities for the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, said:

> People ask, "Why are union women getting it together?" I say, "Women everywhere else are doing it. It's time we did it." People ask, "Why can't the union resolve the problems?" I say, "We *are* the union. We are going to stay in the family and we are going to make our union responsive to our needs. This is not divisive of our union. We've given so much and settled for so little.
>
> Women work for the same reasons as men. They have to. Even when we disagree here, we don't have to be disagreeable. Don't *dis*respect each other. Women have been disrespected long enough. Let's not do it to each other.

Olga Madar, CLUW's new president, said, "The women's movement gave an impetus to our moving ahead." She praised the Women's Equity Action League, NOW, and the National Women's Political Caucus. Actually the relationship of the Coalition to the women's movement is more that of siblings than of child and parent. Both have the same origins. I believe those origins are less in ideas and movements than in economics and technology. Ideas are always around. They need something to germinate in, if they are to grow. That life-giving medium has been: (1) the relatively full employment of the last 20 years; (2) a technology that makes jobs easier for women to perform—as well as a method of birth control enabling people to regulate family size. The civil rights movement has passed on its inspiration. It has also passed on to women inclusion in the Civil Rights Act. It was almost a footnote to the law, but to women it has made all the difference. The civil rights movement too was born of an economy that could offer opportunity in industrial jobs (and education) to blacks.

I don't wish to deny people with ideas due credit for creating social movements. But our words are mainly transmitters. The main power comes out of the movement of economic and technological history. It is not impossible for women to get a fair or equal share when there is a scramble for scarce jobs and goods, but it is far easier to get that share (or at least some of it) when jobs and goods are in abundant supply.

The CLUW women, because they are unionists, understand this very well. Their brief resolution on legislation began: "The major concerns of women workers which require legislation are: *the economy as it relates to their livelihood;* the health and safety of themselves and their families; child care; equal rights" (my italics). Specifically, their first concern was raising and spreading the coverage of the minimum wage, an economic issue. Their concern was full employment.

There was no debate at the convention about birth control, abortion, marriage and the family. Most people regarded these issues as marginal and/or divisive. There was no expressed hostility to the women's liberation movement. A "gay caucus" advertised a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sectarians, many participated constructively and added contrast to the proceedings.

But a few were bent, consciously or not, on making the meeting unbearable. Every Marxist-Leninist, Stalinist, Maoist group was there, plus some new to me. Among the more disruptive ones were perhaps a dozen people (a virtual membership mobilization) of the Spartacus League, "a revolutionary Trotskyist organization," and the National Caucus of Labor Committees, a group given to disruption and violence whenever it comes to any sort of meeting.

• There were also caucuses from within unions: WAM (Workers' Action Movement) from the UAW; the Militant Action Caucus of the CWA (Communications Workers), which distributed its paper *Militant Action*. (The paper called for workers' control of what would in effect be company-financed "family centers," at the job location, to provide child care, laundry services, cafeterias—not a bad idea.) There was the United National Caucus, also active in the UAW, which distributed a publication calling for a labor party, support for farm workers, and the hiring of staff by the AFL to organize women.

At issue

ALL THIS AGITATION had little real effect. The statements of goals and structure, drawn up by the Planning Committee, were adopted essentially as they stood. The main conflict, incredibly enough, was over support of the Farm Workers' Union in their jurisdictional conflict with the Teamsters. The Planning Committee opposed a motion of endorsement because it wanted to avoid conflict between the two unions. It was an admirable enough goal in view of the fact that CLUW's endorsement could not help the Farm Workers anyway. A section on structure, which forbade endorsements in jurisdictional disputes, was defeated in a long and rather rowdy session, but the motion to endorse the Farm Workers was not even considered. Instead, at the concluding session, women from the Teamsters and the Farm Workers embraced on the platform and made moving pleas for unity for both women and farm workers.

If the purpose of this convention had been to deal with issues rather than structures, I would have thought the meeting had failed. Support of the Farm Workers, after all, is not an "issue"; it's a given. Everyone (almost) supports the Farm Workers. Had the Teamsters been foolish enough to withdraw over such an issue, it might have been just as well to let them go. The Coalition strained, perhaps too much, for unity.

At one point a woman rose to say that no reforms would do women any good. "How do we end women's oppression?" she asked. "We must destroy capitalism." There was loud opposition. So miffed was the majority with the "destroyers of capitalism" that their opposition became almost automatic. Aside from the farm workers' episode, the biggest and strangest issue arose in a snarled debate over whether "the Coalition will encourage democratic procedures in all unions." Since the "destroyers" insisted that unions were run undemocratically, others insisted they were not and voted to defeat the amendment. A standing division of the convention was taken on this issue, lasting almost an hour. The vote was close because many women, reasonably enough, felt that unions should be more democratic and voted with the "destroyers."

Factionalism can hurt. Here, it diverted people from real issues. As Addie Wyatt put it, "The thing young people need to learn is that, while we need democracy, we also need a procedure that works."

One woman was distressed by the dissention. Another woman said to her, "Honey, these things have been neglected so long. If you neglected your house, it would be a mess too. It would take a lot of cleaning up." Another woman said, "Sure, it's going to have imperfections. When a baby is born, it has imperfections. It can't see or walk or talk, but it learns."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some unions address all routine mailings to local unions: "Dear Sir and Brother." The IWW greeting "Fellow Workers" was better. "Brother" is a clan sign of the fraternity of males.

Some women insist that these words don't matter, that the male gender is generic and stands for all of us. That's the trouble. It does. It is male, and it stands for us women too. It is no more satisfactory to us than "sisterhood" would be if we tried to include men under its umbrella. "Mankind" is also said to be generic, but we have the sex neutral words "humanity" or "humankind." Why not use them? A woman typographer at the convention reported she rose at her union meeting and introduced herself: "I'm Brother Mollie. If I can't beat you, I'll have to join you."

Then there is the more common vocabulary of the working world: "Workmen"; "manpower"; "journeymen"; the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America; the United States Office of Manpower Training. These symbols suggest that women are an appendage to the work force, which is hardly the case.

Women workers say repeatedly that they do not feel welcome or needed in the union hall. Some resist joining unions because the style, tone, and appeals are male. It is not *theirs,* they feel uneasy, and for the same reason that the token black in an all-white group is uneasy or the white in an all-black group.

Bargaining

ANOTHER OBSTACLE to participation of women in union policy-making is their lack of experience in negotiations. Collective bargaining is what unionism is all about, the basic function of unions. In the UAW, for example, only a small number of staff women are experienced negotiators. Yet all members of the UAW Executive Board must actively engage in contract negotiations. Simply enough, if women don't learn how to negotiate, they cannot function at the top level of their unions.

Women experience two main handicaps as bargainers, neither having to do with ability. One is the limitation that family responsibilities put on them. In a bargaining session a woman cannot get up and say "I gotta go now. My kids need me home." She has to stay in the session, no matter how long it runs. Bargaining is like that. In the bargaining sessions, the schedules are fixed and the outcomes are highly significant for the union. Other union activities, such as education and political action, can be arranged more easily.

Still, many women either overcome these handicaps or don't have them to begin with. In fact, women make good negotiators and some participate in, or lead, shop committees in their unions. But when the union hires a woman on its national staff, it may take the same woman who has successfully led negotiations in her shop and put her on a "special staff" rather than a "service staff." She will be assigned to a woman's department, or an education, political action, or health services department. Rarely will she be assigned to "service" a plant—to handle work grievances, shop disputes, negotiations, or anything relating to the collective-bargaining contract. But without staff experience in bargaining, she will have great difficulty functioning as an equal at policy levels within the union.

The Second Job

THE SECOND JOB—being a wife and/or mother—is one of the chief obstacles to participation of women in anything, from attendance at meetings to policy-making.

In addition to having a full-time job, a woman may have young children who need attention, or a husband who wants his dinner ready or who is afraid she will "meet someone else." She will have dozens of household tasks to do—literally a "second job"—and she will also have to find time to give her husband and children the attention they need. Or she may simply have a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Speaking Up

WOMEN are notoriously reticent about speaking up in groups. This shyness is a great obstacle to participation in the union and often on the job. Nor is this affliction confined to women workers. It affects all of us, but working-class people most of all. Many of them are trained to silence by their educational experiences, and to the conviction that they know nothing that is worth saying. For that reason, as my husband Brendan insists, all good labor education is aimed primarily at giving working people confidence in themselves and in their ability to reach people and influence events.

At the CLUW convention it was almost as if many women had to prove, "I will be outspoken." While this is a good antidote to silence, the ear of the listener often rebels. Without some substance to it, speech is only lip movement. Alas, even in the most informed circles (often especially there) it is just that. Most of the talking at the CLUW sessions, the "points of order" and the tangled procedural motions, came from younger women and many of them tried to score points for a "Left" sect. The more experienced women, knowing that talk is cheap, held their peace. Most were very attentive, but few were afflicted with the "Left's" popular passion for being outspoken even about trivia.

Of course, it takes courage to open one's mouth in public. Almost nothing we do is held against us so much as what we say, as though these weightless symbols were the voice of the heart, mind, and spirit, when often they only mask our inner qualities. Courage to speak and be judged has not been women's strong suit. We have excelled instead at less conspicuous, less competitive kinds of courage. While we need to cultivate more assertive types of courage, we may, I think, overprice the spoken word as a criterion for judging others, as distinguished from the written word, which can be more reflective. There is after all no proven connection between the number (and elegance or symmetry) of words spoken and other qualities we value in people: wisdom, judgment, intelligence, humor, generosity, loyalty, or the ability to do things.

I am grateful to working-class women for not, as a rule, overburdening listeners with verbosity. Usually what they say is simple and to the point. Sometimes what they say rises far above the eloquence of our graduate English faculties.

I am reminded of the dramatic scene at a Cooper Union strike-vote meeting of shirtwaist makers (including Triangle workers) in 1909. The meeting overflowed, but after endless speeches, including a long one by Samuel Gompers, people became restless and started to leave. Clara Lemlich, a teen-age girl, asked for the floor:

> I am a working girl, and one of those who are on strike against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether or not we shall strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared—now!

The strike called was the first large strike of women workers in this country, and the first significant strike in the ILG.

Such moments are rare. Few teen-age girls would have such courage. The silence of many women workers (and men) deprives them of a place in the sun. These women think they have nothing to say; they think nobody will listen to them. They are afraid to be noticed. They need public platforms and the opportunity to speak and debate. These CLUW can give them.

Authority/Respect

WE ARE TRAINED by home, school, and life for leadership or servility. We learn to direct and lead others or we learn to follow and be directed. Too often women are trained to be followers in their life's role, to depend on others, look to others for authority. Insofar as this is true, they are not fully autonomous people. It happens to us all to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women workers and she was, well, a unique woman, but also Upper East Side New York.

Many of the stylistic differences are so subtle that they require special study. A few of the more obvious are: Women workers (of the same age) are stouter than the Steinems. They are usually very neat and clean, but much less carefully and richly groomed. The colors are more vivid (less subtle) and there are more big stripes, many of them on broad beams. Almost nobody wears jeans, though virtually everyone wears slacks. Many "dress up" in the evening, even in long gowns. Hair styles vary over a great range. Some popular styles are never seen on the Upper East Side these days. The high pompadour, for example, with curls piled high on the head. A modified version of this, the teased bouffant, is still popular, though it has almost disappeared among the fashionable. "Natural" styles are less common, among both white and black women, than in fashion centers. Many black women process their hair or wear wigs. Only a few wear Afros. Among the over-twenty white women, neither extra-long nor extra-short hair, natural and uncurled, are popular as they are with upper-class women. Almost none of them (except the younger "Left" women) have hair that looks uncombed. Another unique working-class style is what we used to call the "boyish bob," only this one has a slight bouffant on the top. While the older working-class women keep to traditional styles, the younger ones look and dress more like middle-class and college women.

Does all this matter? I think it does. At any rate, it is hard to talk about women without talking about hair, fashion, style. This too is part of the problem.

To Our Contributors

- When sending manuscripts, please make sure that you do not send your only copy.
- And please also be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. —THE EDITORS

IV UAW Women

A UAW Case Study

DYNAMIC new CLUW President Olga Medar —also the first woman to have been vice-president of the UAW, and so the most important union woman in the nation—has recently made a study of female participation in her union.* As far as I know it is the only study of this kind around.

The UAW has a great many women members. The exact figure is unknown. In GM alone, among hourly employees, there were 61,459 women in 1972. That is 15 percent of total hourly employees at GM. Ford has 16,500 women or 10 percent of the total. Chrysler, including salaried employees, has 11,816 women or 9 percent of the total. It is estimated that, over all, about 13–14 percent of all UAW members are women.

In the UAW there are 74 women local union presidents, or 5 percent of the total. Women comprise 7 percent of local vice-presidents, 16 percent of financial secretaries, and 26 percent of recording secretaries. In these four top local offices, women comprise 13.5 percent of the total, which is almost exactly proportional to their estimated membership in the union. As we might expect, women are overrepresented among "recording secretaries" (a women's job). But they are also overrepresented among financial secretaries, often *the* major office in the local union. Where locals have only one full-time officer, it is usually the financial secretary. Women are likely to be elected to these jobs because they are thought to be better at keeping records and more honest, both of which are indispensible traits for the financial secretary.

These local officers administer the local union. Rarely, except in large locals, do they engage in collective bargaining. As for women leadership in the bargaining process: 85 women or 4 percent of the total num-

---

* Olga Madar retired from the UAW in June to take on CLUW full-time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After we organized, I never had these problems. Suddenly we could speak our piece without fear of being fired. As long as we were doing a good job we felt we had a right to say to the company, "this is a better way of doing it." It's a question of being listened to, on an equal level. It's a question of getting the respect your ability and seniority deserve.

The men always say the women won't come to union meetings. When they're in a majority, men make women feel they're not really wanted. It's important to feel needed, wanted by somebody. Here, at the convention, there was no end to the amount of work that women would do when they knew it was needed. Here they knew they had something important to do. Most of the women went to meetings almost every night, so it can't be said that women won't go to meetings. They'll go if they feel they're needed.

It's difficult to organize office workers. In most plants they automatically get the economic benefits of the shop's collective bargaining. As a union, we have to offer them something over and above that. We offer them the right to the grievance process, arbitration of their grievances, seniority rights, a system through which to get them upgraded and combat the past effects of sex discrimination. It's not only sex discrimination: there are lots of men who have been passed over. The office person is often afraid to organize. In the shop people work somewhere on their own. The foreman is not on top of them. They can talk to each other and get something started. In an office, you work side by side with people in management. It takes more courage.

We now see a number of large international unions organizing office workers, getting some momentum. The trend of the work force is toward office, technical and professional—and less to production. As that happens, we will organize more and more people. And as some jobs become computerized, the clerical people will fear the loss of their jobs and will want to organize.

We rarely handbill a plant with office workers. We work with people individually and in groups. We have people who understand the problems. Our staff members are people who organized their own offices, so they can show people they don't have to be afraid.

The UAW is putting more women on staff. Women can organize as well as men. It used to be that women listened only to men. Now they take pride in listening to other women. All women have been reached a little by the women's liberation movement, and every day it affects them more. It has affected the law and the company policy. We see all women becoming more aware of their rights. When the word "sex" was added to the discrimination law, there were women who never thought they were discriminated against. The law had a profound influence.

Speaking up has done wonders for labor-management relations. I'd rather see women angry than wallowing in fear and apathy. It's healthy to disagree. Men have always disagreed. Even if we women do it spiritedly, it's good. It's time we stopped saying "yes." If we disagree here, at the convention, and say so with fervor and vigor, we can go back into the plant and do it there too, where we need it most. I like to see dissent, so long as a healthy decision comes out of it.

We women have gained through our unions the spirit and the courage to stand up and fight for what we believe in. I would be very worried if women sat there and only said "yes." I'd have the feeling the unions hadn't done us any good at all. As long as we end up together—solidarity forever—it shows we can create something important here. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Trachtenberg's well-developed ideas, therefore, held a strong attraction for me. One purpose of organizing was to create a vehicle for socialist action. Furthermore, we should press for a collective bargaining (CB) representation election even if we could not win it because the CB situation would inexorably force the winning organization to become a union whether it had been one in the beginning or not. Militant action by workers was always to be supported regardless of organizational sponsorship. This last Trachtenberg teaching was particularly important in the Guild's rise to power.

Throughout the 1950s New York City teachers were becoming more and more disgruntled. Once the best paid and most prestigious teachers in the nation, their status was steadily undermined in the postwar period by inflation and deteriorating social conditions in the city. In addition, the world's largest educational bureaucracy at 110 Livingston Street in Brooklyn treated this highly qualified staff with arrogance and contempt.

In January of 1958, the evening high school teachers, affiliated with the Guild's strongest rival, the High School Teachers Association, called the first teachers' strike in the history of the city. In organizational warfare the normal tactical response to a move by a rival would be nonsupport—perhaps even active resistance. But chiefly at Trachtenberg's urging, the Guild gave all-out support to the night school stoppage.

The strike lasted a month, and by the time it was over the militants in the Guild had found their like numbers in the High School Teachers Association and were talking merger of the two groups. Two years later, in February 1960, the UFT was formed by merging the Guild with HSTA militants, who had broken away from the Association. Within two more years the UFT won exclusive representation rights over a hastily constructed coalition of conservatives sponsored by the NEA.

Throughout the five years of the collective bargaining drive Shanker and I became increasingly intimate. By coincidence we had moved into neighboring apartments in Morningside Gardens, the Title I Co-op north of Columbia University. We had a genuine liking for each other. We were constantly in and out of each other's apartments; we rode back and forth to union meetings together, and we often conferred by phone. When Carl Megel, the AFT national president, asked me to recommend someone to become an organizer, I chose Shanker.

Labor tradition assigns a unique role to the organizer. He is recognized as a leader; his recommendations have great authority. And yet he usually does not assume political power in his union. That had been my role. I held the vague title of "special representative," and while I sometimes represented the union in my own right, my main function was to back up Charles Cogen, president of the Guild–UFT from 1951 to 1962. In fact, I did not even become a member of the local lest I be considered a political rival.

Originally Shanker was content to be a partner on the organizing team. Soon after the UFT won the CB representation election, however, it became apparent that he had strong political ambitions. One night he informed me that he was *not* going to run against Cogen for president, even though he was on his way to meet with a group that wanted him to run.

From then on it was only a matter of time before Shanker realized his ambitions. He gave a nod to labor tradition by returning to the classroom for a brief stint, but in the spring of 1964 he became UFT president, while Cogen, a few months later, became president of the American Federation of of Teachers.

I had a strong hand in Cogen's rise to AFT president, although quite by accident. My interest in the teachers' union had long been national.

I hoped that the AFT could, in concert with other progressive unions, be a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

City Council election as a horrible example of the unworkability of proportional (minority) representation, not mentioning that the ill-fated New York experiment used a particularly complicated form of the O'Hare system.

I was elected AFT President in 1968. The first open break in my relationship with Shanker occurred at the AFT convention the following year. Working with other conservative leaders, he defeated, over my opposition, liberal resolutions on the war in Southeast Asia, student rights, direct election of the AFT president, and a number of other issues. Following the convention I resigned in protest from the Progressive Caucus, the majority party in the AFT and the national equivalent of Shanker's New York Unity Caucus. I said the Progressive Caucus was neither progressive nor a caucus.

During the six months following the 1969 convention I negotiated with Shanker and other AFT leaders for a series of progressive proposals for the 1970 convention, with the result that most of the conservative stands of the previous year were modified. In addition, I got Shanker to go for a 25 cent increase in per capita to be used for a strike fund.

Even so, my truce with Shanker was an uneasy one. It was clear that we were on a collision course. In the fall of 1972 hostilities broke out into the open. The issue was the AFT's relationship to the AFL–CIO.

Taking into account the extreme left-to-right distribution of the more than a hundred constituent unions of the AFL–CIO, to say nothing of unaffiliated unions, George Meany has done a remarkable job in keeping the labor federation together. Under Meany's guidance AFL–CIO policy, except for the Vietnam war, trade, and perhaps environmental issues, has been reasonably liberal.

I have long believed, however, that the AFT should work with other liberal unions to increase the liberal commitment of the AFL–CIO. Shanker has never seen it this way. Hence, when 35 unions representing more than half the unionized workers of the nation joined together to oppose the reelection of Richard Nixon, Shanker stayed "neutral" along with Meany.

There is no doubt that Shanker's role in the 1972 election cemented his relationship with the Meany administration, but personal ambition aside, he scarcely needed this motivation. For one thing, the Shachtmanite democratic-socialist faction, with which Shanker works closely, has long supported military containment of Communism. George McGovern's outspoken condemnation of the war in Southeast Asia therefore made him suspect—an impression the New Politics types around the Senator did nothing to dispel.

Another inhibiting factor was the attitude of the New York labor movement. In the spring of 1972, long before either the Republican or the Democratic conventions, the entire labor officialdom of the city, Shanker among them, attended a riproaring political clambake at Governor Nelson Rockefeller's Westchester County estate. No votes were taken and no commitments expressed, but jolly good feeling was rampant. It is hard to say what teachers got out of Rockefeller's romance with labor, but one of the celebrants, Peter Brennan, is now Secretary of Labor.

In the fall of 1972, even as the Nixon/McGovern campaign was in progress, Shanker asked my support for his candidacy for a spot on the AFL–CIO executive council. I refused and referred the question to the AFT executive council. The debate was bitter. Shanker stated that he had the support of the Meany administration and that I was unacceptable. I took the position that it was better to stay off the council than to gain a seat by Meany's permission.

The AFT executive council, by a narrow 11–9 voice vote, went for Shanker. Once this initial vote was taken, the succeeding roll-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expect to find Al Shanker in the door of the White House when it comes to matters affecting education.

A machine such as Shanker has put together in New York is hard to fight. Shanker has political power, money, and the backing of the labor establishment. He is as ruthless as he is megalomanic. He is now determined to go nationwide, and it looks as though he may succeed—for a while.

But the AFT is based on local autonomy. As the AFT constitution now stands, at least, the national organization cannot even put a local into trusteeship. There are strong indications that, outside New York City, a secret vote ballot would show Shanker has the support of less than half the members. AFT members must do what the coal miners and other progressive rank-and-file groups have done. We must keep up the struggle—and keep up the faith—for liberalism and democracy. □

Postscript

SINCE THE ABOVE was written, Shanker's campaign for AFT president has taken an ugly turn. In a mailing sent nationwide in June, Shanker lists paragraph after paragraph of untrue and deceptive statements.

Item seven in this list of ten states that Shanker should be supported in order to "repudiate extremism." The paragraph is a blatant McCarthyite red smear. Shanker seeks to have people believe that the AFT is in danger of being taken over by "the Communist Party and other extremist groups." His concluding line would be hilarious in a less serious connotation: "I will not accept the support of any of these groups."

Shanker's own extremist actions do evoke extreme reactions. He repudiates liberal positions that have long been part of the underlying philosophy of the AFT, divides and polarizes the membership, and betrays the liberal tradition of our union. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to believe it will find a place in history simply because it focused on the long overburdened rural population: this, in a way, was an immense achievement. Still, there can be no denying that the power Allende assumed in 1970 was lost in the short span of less than three years. Allende failed to master his mount: in fact, he was thrown from the saddle, and that is failure. It is this failure that we must explain.

ONE REASON for Allende's misfortunes was that neither he nor his socialist friends ever really knew what they wanted. The proof is in the following passage by Régis Debray:

> Allende showed me a copy of the book on guerrilla warfare Ché had inscribed for him: "For Salvador Allende, who seeks to achieve the same end by other means." And Allende commented: "The revolutionary struggle may be a guerrilla campaign, a people's war, an insurrection, or a general election, depending on its specific content." *

The inherent ambiguity of the Unidad Popular is apparent in this seemingly straightforward passage. It seems to imply that there is *some* point in making a distinction between two kinds of situations: those in which democratic processes favor the material and spiritual improvement of the underprivileged, and those in which one must first "bring the whole house down." In that case, nothing very new is being said—unless it is that prudence recommends exhausting all political avenues before resorting to insurrection. At first reading, then, Allende seems to be saying simply that if guerrilla warfare no longer makes sense—say, in Sweden, England, or even contemporary France—it may constitute the *ultima ratio* in Bolivia, and under certain circumstances in Chile.

But Allende's statement also suggests something entirely different. It implies the possibility of using elections to "radicalize" the political situation. Elections may rapidly render the situation truly revolutionary, pushing things to the point where the seizure of power becomes inevitable. That this was what Allende meant is clearly revealed in the rest of his dialogue with Debray. "Lenin," recalls Debray, "said that there were two types of reforms: those that try to foil revolution, and those that try to promote revolution." The Chilean President's response is not surprising: "Our reforms are those that promote revolution." Debray continues:

> I objected to this, reminding him of what he himself had said—that the era of the Popular Front was over in Latin America. "This is no Popular Front," answered Allende. "A workers' front, perhaps, or a patriotic front, or a movement of popular unity, but always with a central nervous system directly activated by the working class. . . . So that if you ask me, Who will use whom?, I answer, The proletariat."

Thus the choice between machine guns and ballots is not a logical choice, even less a normative one. Never would Allende have accepted a choice between the horns of what for him was not a genuine dilemma. For Allende it was not a question of renouncing one of two means. The real question was how to use both—in alternation, or in succession.

One may wonder if Allende really took these statements seriously. He was highly aware of the advantages a politician like himself might derive from this ambiguous combination of peace-loving humanism ("we wish to create a government that is democratic, national, revolutionary, and popular, because we know socialism cannot impose itself by decree") and "proletarian radicalism" ("Who will use whom? I answer, The proletariat"). Guerrilla warfare and revolutionary violence did not really enter into the universe of this Chilean politician, but the *rhetoric* of the "maximalists" (extremists) was so well-suited to the role he intended to play that he was finally seduced into their glib fallacies.

---

* *Combat*, Sept. 23, 1973.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crats who had won third place in the general elections, counseled the opposite course. Eventually Tomic was heeded by the rank and file. But in order to pacify Frei and the right-wing Christian Democrats, Allende wrote a vague letter in which he pledged to respect civil liberties and the constitution. And so Allende became president of the Republic, but only as the champion of a "favored minority," and after having committed himself to a *pacto de caballeros* with the parties of the Center.

It is true that Allende was not the first Chilean president to enter the Moneda palace under such conditions. Jorge Alessandri, a conservative, had done so in similar circumstances in 1958. But Alessandri was not about to challenge anything or anybody. For example, he made no attempt to restore the notorious anti-Communist law on the *Defensa de la Democracía,* which had been abrogated on the eve of the 1958 elections. Thus he respected a tradition of multiparty regimes which holds that the government, *especially if it is a minority government,* does not "go after" the opposition, and does not threaten the persons, goods, or convictions of the ordinary citizens who compose it. But from the very start, Allende played a double role, alternating a "revolutionary" stance with a "legalist" one. The clever—in fact, too clever—amalgamation of these two roles enabled him to pull off a dubious move: by invoking some unabrogated decrees of the 1930s, the President arrogated the right to appoint government representatives, who, at his discretion, could replace the managers of companies—without any prior nationalization of those companies. For a revolutionary government such an action would seem pretty fair play. It could even be called legal, in the literal sense of the word. But it is certainly not hard to see why the Christian Democrats felt they had been swindled. Despite the *pacto de caballeros,* the President had taken all the bedclothes for himself, and hogged the bed as well.

The political interplay within pluralist regimes is regulated by what I shall call the principle of moderation. I do not use the word in a moral sense; it implies here only that the stakes in such a political struggle are limited, and, to use Allende's own words, *socialism cannot be imposed by decree.* True, this principle tends to favor conservative interests, or, more generally, "vested interests," large or small. In effect, it means that these interests may be worn down only by slow and lengthy erosion or by negotiations with the owners, until the latter, through pressure and persuasion, acquiesce in the new situation.

Such procedures, of course, are inconvenient. But Eduardo Frei took them for granted when, in submitting his agrarian reform bill, he agreed to a preliminary constitutional review. Such an approach may also seem too slow, uncertain, and inefficient. But it is indeed imprudent to invoke "legality" when, even in its most narrow sense, that legality contradicts the spirit of a nation's laws and institutions.

Because Allende was restricted by his flirtation with the ultra-Left, his control over his own followers became the key to success. Yet nothing was more divided than this Movement of Popular Unity. Its diversity introduced whole layers of cliques and clienteles into the government, forcing the administrative branches into convulsive immobility. There were also the deep divisions inside the Socialist party, where Allende's influence was counterbalanced by those of the leftists who had found in Altamirano, the Party's secretary-general, a pliant associate. Except on the emotional level, Allende could not really count on any unswerving support even from his own party.

His allies also kept him busy. In addition to the Socialist party, the left-wing coalition included two distinct blocs: the Communists and the ultra-Left. The latter, admittedly rather cursory term refers to several tendencies within the M.I.R. (Miristas, followers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

encouraging results. Yet there was still plenty of room for the ultra-Left in its quest for "the masses."

In the countryside, the situation was characterized by two factors. First, there was the erosion of the old political structures and the problematical status of the *patrones,* whose power was now threatened by the agrarian reform. These tendencies, already apparent at the close of the Frei administration, were confirmed by Agriculture Minister Chonchol's precipitous implementation of an agrarian policy far more radical in its objectives and forceful in its means. Second, the *inquilinos* and the *peones* were very poorly organized—when they were organized at all. In 1970 the unions had hardly begun to penetrate to the agricultural wage-earners. Thus, when the traditional structures started to fall apart, a sort of power vacuum was created.

Why did the ultra-Left offensive succeed? First, the ultra-leftists mobilized certain marginal groups who might have found themselves "excluded" even by a progressive government. For example, they saw to it that those peasants who would have been left empty-handed by too strict an interpretation of the law, or who would have fallen entirely outside the jurisdiction of the law, also benefited from the land redistribution program. At the same time, by installing themselves as employees in official bodies, they not only gained impunity in their actions but also assumed the prestige that peasants, in their age-old submissiveness, always grant to representatives of the state. And so the ultra-leftists became the envoys of the *compañero Presidente,* or, as he would have been called in the old days, *su Excelencia.*

What I have referred to as the ultra-leftists' tactical use of "spontaneity" consisted in the perpetual instigatory pressure with which they outflanked official positions. To defend this tactic they pointed—with the complicity or at least acquiescence of the Executive—to the compelling "spontaneity of the masses." What I have called the ultra-leftists' tactical use of "paternalism" consisted in presenting themselves in official roles, thus ensuring the neutrality (or even the active support) of the local authorities as well as the obedience of the peasants. A comparable process took place later in the *poblaciones* and in the *cordon industrial* of the large cities. Here the M.I.R. managed to "show its teeth" by combining a display of force—including the formation in certain districts of illegal "popular tribunals"—with a demonstration of its efficiency in obtaining various concessions (i.e., after the implementation of rationing, a favored position in food allocations).

Why did the Allende government not react to the creation of these parallel centers? First, one must not forget that the Socialist party, or at least its more turbulent factions, wanted to avoid at all cost a break with the M.I.R. A confrontation with the M.I.R. would have threatened to splinter the President's own party, a grave risk indeed considering the role of the Socialists in the governing coalition. Second, one must allow for the President's repugnance to "shed blood" —or even run the risk of shedding it. There is also an ingenious Machiavellian scheme I heard aired on several occasions: the pressure of the M.I.R. would enable the government to expose the weakness of the "paper tigers of the bourgeoisie," while at the same time the occupation of businesses by the M.I.R. would extend the sector of socially controlled property. In any case, the President seems never to have seriously considered the option of trying to dissuade *los muchachos* (the boys).

Allende's own postures had already made him their captive. In 1936 Léon Blum took great pains to indicate that his government would honestly take into account the interests of the middle class. Both Blum and the Communist leaders were preoccupied with surmounting a crisis, especially with repelling fascism. Allende's approach was the opposite: had he not proclaimed that "the era of popular fronts is over"? Thus the M.I.R.-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional violence of this phenomenon during the Allende administration calls for special explanations. I can see four: the policy of economic stimulation sponsored by the government in 1970, the subsistence crisis brought on by the agrarian reform, the dislocation of the industrial economy, and the crisis in foreign payments.

When M. Mitterand confidently hailed "the Chilean road to socialism," the Allende government's "stimulation" of the Chilean economy was still in its earliest phase, which in fact was very promising. Inflation was still in the fizzy or frothy stage. The government's experts—honest economists for the most part—had gained their professional experience not in business management or administrative positions, but as officials of the C.E.P.A.L. or as planners in the C.O.R.F.O.* At the end of Frei's administration, they had found the Chilean economy in the throes of serious underemployment. This, aside from its structural causes, had resulted from the overpayments the Chilean government, deeply in debt, was making in order to regain its credit abroad. Allende's ministry of economics, trying to make full use of the nation's fallow productive capabilities, adopted a policy of cheap money, massive salary raises, and public spending. The results were a remarkable takeoff in industrial production—which rose 7 percent in fiscal 1971, reduced unemployment, depleted monetary reserves—and a rise in the real earnings of the least privileged social categories. These brilliant results were achieved by allowing a 10 percent inflationary price hike for the year—an exceptionally good bargain for Chile.

But this "expansion of stability" did not last more than a year. Very soon the destabilization factors I have mentioned (accelerated agrarian reform, wildcat nationalizations) derailed the whole process, reinforcing the potentially inflationary effect of the economic program. Consequently, the absence of compensatory measures, designed to withhold from other social categories the equivalent of the purchasing power distributed by the government—plus additional income created by salary raises, the rise in employment, and deficits sustained both by the state and its nationalized enterprises—precipitated an avalanche of inflated purchasing power onto a market in which goods were already growing scarce.

A crisis in the production of subsistence commodities often accompanies agrarian reforms. But in the Chilean case the reduction of agricultural production occasioned by the disorder and violence in the countryside was brutally aggravated by the deterioration of monetary mechanisms. The rapid depreciation of money is never an incentive to part cheaply with real goods; that was even less the case when, after the introduction of rationing, it became obvious that the black market offered producers much better remuneration than the official market. Hence it was necessary to import increasing quantities of foodstuffs, whose cost mounted as the state's monetary reserves were depleted.

The dislocation of the industrial economy pursued a more complicated path, but soon the same fatal dynamics emerged. Industrial conditions were rapidly aggravated by "workers' collectives" whose erratic appearance in sectors for which no nationalization had been projected produced three kinds of effects. (1) Owners who had been expelled, dispossessed, or threatened began to stop investing; this was clear by 1972, when practically all investment came from the public sector. (2) Business management followed a logic neither of profit nor of a planned economy; the large deficits that resulted were dumped squarely in the lap of the state, which once again proceeded to finance its operations with fiat money. (3) At length the public sector, perpetually overburdened with a collection of disparate enterprises of ill-defined status

* C.E.P.A.L.: Comisión Economica para America Latina (a U.N. body). C.O.R.F.O.: Corporación de Fomento: a government agency responsible for allocating public and private money to industrial development programs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the Christian Democrats. The relationship between the Christian Democracy and the Unidad Popular was complex and elusive. At first glance, one might have thought that they were diametrically opposed: the Chilean Left was secular and "Marxist," while the Christian Democrats denounced "atheistic materialism" and "Communist oppression." Yet the Christian Democratic leaders and those of Unidad Popular shared a "philosophy" of development and progress. They were in agreement on the principal articles of the *desarollista* (development) catechism as it had been elaborated in the C.E.P.A.L. The three principal articles of this creed were agrarian reform, industrialization, and, above all, the end of dependence on foreign interests. But these recommendations were too vague to hold the *desarollistas* together once they began to translate them into specific directives. Agrarian reform—granted. But how fast should the expropriations take place? In what way would the owners be indemnified? How would the new agricultural cultivation be run? Industrialization—fine. But should it be left in the hands of the Chilean bourgeoisie? Or would it be better to nationalize industry, or to place it under state control, or to organize it in cooperatives? Could the end of dependence be achieved by the expropriation of all foreign companies? And should this expropriation be accompanied by indemnities?

Whatever the divergences and confusions, many partisans of Frei and especially of Tomic had long felt closer to Allende than to the conservative Jorge Alessandri and his *momios.** But the Chilean Christian Democratic party is characterized by an ambiguity also found in many of its sister parties: its leaders lean more to the Left than its constituents. Yet their "social" orientation did not stop them from being highly wary of the Communists. Any alliance of a "popular front" type put the Christian Democrats on red alert; this endemic suspiciousness was probably behind Frei's effort in 1970 to dissuade his colleagues from giving Allende the necessary congressional votes for his election. Frei was fearful of an outright Communist takeover, rather than of leftist subversion.

Was negotiation still possible between Frei and Allende in 1972? Could the President of the Republic have come to terms with Congress to keep his ship from going down? Could they not simply have agreed on a fixed list of nationalized firms, agreeing to refrain from further nationalizations or "interventions" by pure executive decree (for the latter had served as an implicit endorsement of the fantasy politics behind the occupations carried out by the M.I.R.-manipulated "workers' collectives")? Had these conditions been met, it might have been possible to launch (with the necessary foreign assistance) a stabilization plan to put the Chilean economy back on the right track.

In this way Allende might have made the fullest use of his mandate, not in the maximalist grand style perhaps, but more prosaically, as a "lame duck," or rather, to use the appropriate Spanish saying: *entrada a caballo, salida en burro* ("Came in on a horse, went out on an ass").

The durability of such an arrangement is debatable; it is certain that it was never achieved. The Communists were not against it. Everything suggests that they urged the President to seek it. It was in his own party that Allende encountered really die-hard resistance to this policy. For their part, the Christian Democrats were starting to balk. As the situation deteriorated, Eduardo Frei's hard-line supporters also stiffened their terms. The prospect of jumping into a hopelessly leaky boat, or tossing a life-saver to a drowning enemy, is never terribly appealing. Moreover, the extreme polarization rendered the position of a centrist party, like that of the Christian Democrats, increasingly difficult.

---

* *Momios:* play of words on *momio* (meager, insubstantial) and *momia* (mummy).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The process of political disintegration did not reach its nadir until the army in its turn was sucked into the whirlpool. It is not enough to deplore Allende's error of calling in the army to settle the truckers' strike. For one must understand that by October 1972 the badly winded President had no other recourse (in case of serious hostilities or of progressively harder resistance by the middle class) than soldiers and police to ensure the transportation and delivery of food supplies. One must also understand that by entrusting the Ministry of the Interior to the army's commander-in-chief—even if a very dear and loyal friend—Allende was giving the house keys not to an individual, General Pratt, but to the leader of the military establishment. Which was one more compelling reason for him to work out a compromise with Congress after the settlement of the truckers' strike.

Perhaps Allende asked too high a price of Frei. Or perhaps each was restricted by intransigent die-hards in his own party. In any case, the danger which apparently neither of them grasped was that in designating the army as the ultimate resource, they were exposing it to possible internal divisions. Such divisions would almost certainly lead to military intervention as soon as the generals realized that the unity of their army was imperiled. I am not in a position to put together an exact picture of the tangled schemes that, following the June 29 attempt, led to the successful putsch of September 11. What strikes me is that during this period the tensions and dissensions within the armed forces become increasingly visible and bitter.

Two events seem to have precipitated the military intervention. The first was the M.I.R.'s attempt to infiltrate the navy, which provoked a brutal rejoinder from its officers. The second was the inevitable clash between civilian political power and the military hierarchy, a direct result of the decision to bring top general-staff officers into the government. General Pratt, who had supported the President, was obliged by other staff officers to tender his resignation to Allende, thus paving the way for the partisans of a *coup d'état*.

To consummate the death of constitutionality, the process of disintegration and polarization must favor the hegemony of the most reactionary elements in the military. The liquidation of the Allende regime might have been carried out by officers committed to restoring power to civil authority as soon as possible. But the Junta is controlled by men with very different views indeed. Even if the new masters of Chile have only the most confused ideas on how to bring about "national reconstruction," even if they waver between the Peruvian and Brazilian models, they have certainly decided to stay in power for an indefinite period, and by all possible means, not excluding the most cruel.

The capture of the army by its most ruthless elements merits some consideration, but for the moment, I see no entirely satisfactory explanation. Of all the Latin-American military establishments, that of Chile (along with that of Uruguay) was supposed to be the most openly legalist. Its officers, as opposed to those of Brazil and Peru, do not seem to have been lengthily exposed to any ideology that would have encouraged them to see the army as a force above all parties and class interests. What requires explanation is the rapidity with which the Chilean army shifted from submitting to civil authority to a repressive ideology. . . . Perhaps the army "hard-liners" won the dispute when they were able to convince the "legalists" that the "unity of the army"—a condition to which all military men are sensitive—could not be maintained if the convulsive decomposition of the state were to go beyond a certain point.

As I have described its rush to the abyss, the Allende regime is a marvelous illustration of a process perceptively analyzed by Juan Linz in a manuscript entitled "The Breakdown of Democratic Politics." It comprises a comparative study of the crisis leading up to Italian fascism, of the period pre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ceding the Spanish Civil War (from the end of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship until July 19, 1936), and of the dissolution (*Auflösung*) of the Weimar Republic, which culminated in Hitler's seizure of power. This seems to be the most appropriate perspective from which to study the implacable chain of events which in three years shattered the Unidad Popular and constitutionality of the Chilean state. I am aware that my analysis concentrates on a fairly short time span, and that many long-term considerations and other structural elements must eventually be taken into account. But whatever the crimes of the Junta, they neither abolish nor absolve the follies of the Allende administration. □

[*The original article ended here. The following was added by the author for this appearance in* DISSENT.]

A Postscript on the American Role in Chile

IN THE DEMONOLOGY of the "revolutionary Left," foreign monopolies occupy a position second only to the military. Eager to present Allende's downfall simply as the result of a vicious conspiracy, they refuse to admit that the putsch of September 11, 1973, had any relation at all to the bad judgment and irresponsibility of the Chilean Left.

Of course, the importance of American investments in Chile cannot be exaggerated. About 80 percent of Chile's exports was composed of copper, whose production was controlled by big American companies such as Anaconda and Kennecott. Moreover, Chile's foreign debt, both short- and middle-term, had become a truly staggering burden as a result of Frei's heavy borrowing policy. For the Chilean government to meet its responsibilities to its creditors, over a quarter of the revenue of all exports would have had to be used to repay the foreign debt. At the time of Allende's assumption of office, one of the major tasks of Chilean business was to obtain a review of all outstanding arrears and overdue payments from the creditors of the Chilean state in the Club de Paris.

These facts are usually minimized or ignored altogether by those who, like Armando Uribe, believe that "*the true aim* of the September 11 coup was the destruction of the Chilean state. . . . The U.S. government and the traitors in the Chilean armed forces were in complicity to achieve this goal." [1] Big American corporations like I.T.T. are also alleged to have intervened directly in Chilean politics, and also to have urged the Washington authorities to launch a preventive coup to stop the Chilean president-elect from ever assuming power. This is most certainly true, but it is also true that I.T.T.'s lobby was far from having convinced the U.S. government of the advisability of this course. Although certain newspapers were already vitriolically attacking the Chilean president-elect, the State Department and the President's advisers seemed on the whole rather cool to the idea of forcible intervention. It is undoubtedly true that they viewed the formation of a Popular Unity government in Santiago with extreme displeasure. But it is just as true that the Nixon administration had already adopted a cautious and temporizing policy toward Latin America—what's known in government jargon as a "low profile." (A good example is the way the American authorities reacted to the Peruvian junta's expropriation of International Petroleum, as well as to the nationalist vehemence of the Peruvian spokesmen.) Armando Uribe simply has no proof that the U.S. government was determined to crush the Popular Unity regime at all costs. On the contrary, I suspect that at the beginning of the Allende affair Washington's position was not at all clear, and that a margin of action was available to the Santiago government.

Santiago adopted an absolutely intransigent position on indemnification. I'm not in a position to know if the unpaid back taxes

[1] Armando Uribe, "Le livre noire de l'intervention américaine au Chile," *Le Seuil*, Paris, 1973. Italics mine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and excessive profits, which Santiago cited as reasons for its refusal to indemnify the expropriated firms, had actually been fairly computed or not. But one can see how easy it was for the enemies of Popular Unity to capitalize on this. Henry Kissinger is supposed to have told Orlando Letelier, then Chilean ambassador to Washington: "Pay only one dollar if you like, but pay something!" [2]

It seems that the most violently "anti-imperialist" elements in the M.I.R. and the Socialist party were pressuring the Chilean government to stick to its hard line on the indemnities question. There are two basic points of view on this hard line. According to Armando Uribe's supernationalist thesis, the refusal of the expropriated companies to accept the decision of the Chilean magistrates (who, by reason of the companies' alleged excess profits and unpaid back taxes, had denied them any compensation) amounted to a rejection of the sovereignty of the Chilean judiciary, and thus constituted an intervention in Chile's internal affairs. To this juridical argument—which implies that all arbitration or mediation involving a government entails a violation of national sovereignty—Uribe adds a moral denunciation of the "hypocrisy" of the American government, which he accuses of having objected to Chilean proposals for the consolidation of the Chilean national debt. The best argument Uribe can muster to prove that Henry Kissinger was plotting "the destruction of the Chilean state" is that, having failed to obtain any compensation for the nationalized American companies, Kissinger didn't bother to urge the Club de Paris to extend the terms of its loans or to grant new credits to the Santiago government. I simply don't find this argument very convincing.

With regard to foreign policy, the strategy of President Allende and his friends in Popular Unity really amounted to no strategy at all. It was a compound of dogmatism, cynicism, and sheer silliness. The tendency to fall back upon anti-imperialist rhetoric is particularly dogmatic, though understandable in view of foreign capitalism's strong grip on Chile's economy. This dogmatism led the Chileans to hang on to rigid, untenable positions in which they themselves actually had no meaningful stake. For example, by demanding nationalization without indemnification, they were actually insisting on taking over the totality of the foreign companies' debts to various third parties.

Finally, when I speak of a compound of cynicism and silliness, I'm referring to my own belief that during the Paris negotiations the Chilean authorities initially tried to play their foreign creditors off against each other, especially the Europeans against the Americans. They seem to have had a highly exaggerated conception of their own ability to resist foreign economic pressure, as well as to find alternative support and aid to replace that of the United States. Although this theme has now vanished from the litany of the nationalist Latin-American Left, it has long believed, or claimed to believe, that the Soviets were ready and willing to replace the Americans at a moment's notice. In fact, Soviet aid to Chile soon turned out to be quite modest if not utterly insignificant.

Translated by DANIEL HOFSTADTER □

[2] "Paguen un dolar, pero paguen algo!" These words are reported in Jorge Edwards's book, *Persona non grata* (Barcelona: Barrel, 1973), p. 454. In the same volume one finds Pablo Neruda, the Chilean ambassador to Paris, emphasizing the need for caution. Cf. p. 450.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Varlam Shalamov

Lend-Lease Comes to a Soviet Camp

The poet Varlam Shalamov learned about Soviet concentration camps through his own experience. In 1929, at the age of 22, he was sentenced to three years of hard labor for "counterrevolutionary activities." He served the full term. Rearrested in 1937, he was sent to the far northeast of Siberia and spent the next 17 years in Kolyma, most dreadful of Soviet labor camps. (Kolyma is a well-known colloquial term denoting the basin of the Kolyma River in Siberia, known administratively as Magadan Province [562,850 sq. miles]. This area's rich ores—gold, wolfram, uranium, coal—have been developed through slave labor. To one of these camps was sent Andrei Amalrik in August 1971, dissenter and author of the pamphlet Will the Soviet Union Survive Till 1984?.)

After his 1957 rehabilitation, Shalamov returned to creative writing. His poems have appeared in Moskva, Younost', *and* Znamya; *two small collections appeared separately in 1961 and 1964.*

His prose has not been accepted by the Soviet publishing houses. But while not in print in the U.S.S.R., Shalamov's work is known to Russian readers in handwritten and mimeographed form (Samizdat). *Some of it has reached the West.*

The story that follows, as most of the writer's prose, deals with life and death in Soviet concentration camps. Quietly, without rhetoric or exaggeration, the author paints his picture of the isolated world of the camps. Shalamov's stories show the essential difference between an investigation prison and a hard-labor camp. The objective of the first was to destroy the prisoner's spirit, of the second to destroy him physically, by starvation, cold, and a 14- to 16-hour work day. In his story The Tartar Mullah and Fresh Air, *the author notes that the famous Russian revolutionaries Nicholas Morozov and Vera Figner, who spent 25 years in the strictest Csarist jails, came out sane and relatively healthy.*

The same ironic note sounds in his description of the high aristocracy of Soviet prisons, the common criminals. No matter how grave their crimes, they were crimes against fellow citizens, not against the Party. They were therefore considered to be more reliable than political prisoners.

Side by side with these criminal underworld representatives stood those who belonged to the camp administration. In Two Encounters *the author describes a mine manager, Anisimov, who ordered a foreman to be shot for not standing up in his presence and who slapped prisoners with his heavy leather gloves. Another "acquaintance" of Shalamov, the sadistic civilian employee* Engineer Kiselev, *assaulted and mutilated his defenseless slave workers until he fell victim to his own cunning.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political prisoners, those sentenced under Article 58 for "counterrevolutionary activity," were at the very bottom of concentration camp society. Shalamov recalls several of his fellow inmates in his touching Epitaph*—intellectuals and peasants, former Party dignitaries, Red Army officers, Navy captains and scholars, scientists, philosophers, the French Communist Derfell, the Dutch Communist Fritz David who hardly could understand Russian and lost his sanity; a legion of others, unknown and nameless, but sharing the same fate.*

In these stories, the camp hospital plays a unique part. Here were doctors who really wanted to help their fellow prisoners. The easygoing Dr. Zaytsev became a real physician again the moment he diagnosed an extremely rare case of Aneurism of the Aorta *in a beautiful female prisoner. He checked his diagnosis, he fought, he warned the authorities, but he could not overcome their distrust. Katya Glovatsky fell dead while climbing into the truck that was to carry her back to the mine. It was Vinokurov, director of the hospital, who did his best to change and prolong the* Life of Engineer Kipreyev, *but was told by the general in charge at Kolyma that "talent or not" this prisoner belonged where his "article" indicated he belonged, in the gold mine. In the camp hospital where the elderly Professor Umansky worked, he proudly proclaimed himself* The Mendelist, *a follower of Mendel's genetic theories despite their rejection by the Party.*

Most of Shalamov's short stories are autobiographic and have the ring of truth. He is one of the few survivors, one of the few to survive and bear witness.

MARK LIWSZYC

The fresh tractor trail in the mud looked like the footsteps of some prehistoric beast; it seemed to have little relation to the Lend-Lease delivery of American technical equipment.

Even we concentration camp inmates had heard about these overseas gifts, so confusing to the mind of the camp authorities. Shabby knitted suits, secondhand pullovers and jumpers, collected overseas for the inmates of Kolyma were snatched up by the wives of the Magadan generals,[1] during what would develop almost into a scuffle. These woolen treasures were marked "secondhand" in the inventories, this, of course, seeming far more expressive an adjective than "shabby" or "b/u"—having "been used"—terms only familiar to concentration camp ears. The expression "secondhand" was mysteriously indefinite, as if something had been held in one's hand or kept home in a closet.

Lend-Lease sausage was not at all "secondhand," but we saw the legendary cans only from afar. Lend-Lease pork stew in fat-bellied jars, this we knew very well. Measured according to a complicated table, stolen by greedy supervisors, counted and recounted, measured out again before being put into the cauldrons, there to be boiled soft and transformed into some mysterious substance smelling of anything but meat—Lend-Lease pork stew excited our eyes but not our taste buds. Pork stew from the camp cauldron had no taste at all. The inmates' stomachs preferred native food, such as old, rotten venison that could not be boiled soft in the seven camp cauldrons. Venison did not disappear or evaporate like pork stew.

Lend-Lease oatmeal we approved of and ate. But we received no more than two tablespoons of porridge per head.

Lend-Lease technical equipment arrived, too. Equipment that one could not eat—uncomfortable tomahawk hatchets, very comfortable short-handled spades, non-Russian handles that spared the loader's strength.

[1] Magadan, the capital city of Magadan Province, which includes the basin of the Kolyma River, is an administrative center for all Kolyma concentration camps.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These spades were immediately attached to long handles in accord with the local style, and flattened so that they could pick up more soil.

Glycerine in barrels! Glycerine! On the very first night the watchman ladled out a pailful of liquid glycerine and sold it to the inmates as "American honey"; made himself a nice profit, too.

Via Lend-Lease there also came huge, black ten-ton Diamond-T trucks and trailers with iron sides, and five-ton Studebakers that could easily climb any hill. They were the best trucks in Kolyma. Day and night these Studebakers and Diamond-T's transported American Lend-Lease wheat, in beautiful white linen bags with the American eagle sewed on them, along the thousand-mile route. They baked pudgy, tasteless "rations" with this flour. Lend-Lease bread had a remarkable quality. Everyone who ate it stopped going to the toilet; once every five days one's stomach exploded in what could scarcely be called a bowel movement. So completely did the prisoners' stomachs and bowels absorb this splendid white bread with its mixture of corn, bonemeal, and other doubtful ingredients, which were perhaps, in reality, mere human hope leaving no residue. The time had not yet come to count all the people saved by this overseas wheat.

The Studebakers and Diamond-T's used up a lot of gas. But gas, a light aircraft gas, also came via Lend-Lease. Soviet GAZ cars had been reequipped for wood fuel. Two stove pipes, installed near the motor, were heated by "churka," wood cut into small pieces and dried in a special stove. The word "churka" came into widespread usage, and several "churka" enterprises headed by party members were set up. Each such enterprise was staffed by a chief engineer, a regular engineer, a labor overseer, a planner, and accountants. I do not recall how many "sloggers" were in each enterprise—two, more likely three, for each shift. They prepared the "churka" using a circular saw; Lend-Lease supplied technical equipment; it brought us a tractor and, with it, a new word for the Russian language, "bulldozer."

The prehistoric beast was unchained and let loose on its caterpillar tracks. This was an American bulldozer with a wide blade, the moldboard, a hanging metal shield that shone like a mirror. This mirror reflected the sky, the trees and the stars, along with the dirty faces of the prisoners. Even the armed guard approached this overseas wonder and said that he could shave in front of the iron mirror. But we weren't thinking about shaving, such an idea never occurred to us.

The sighs and groans of the new American beast resounded for a long time in the frosty air. The bulldozer coughed in the frost, its anger growing. Finally it began to puff and to howl, then it boldly dashed ahead, crushing the mounds in its path and easily rolling over the tree stumps. This was overseas help.

No longer would it be necessary for us to "trel" the massive logs of Daurya larch. Timber and wood lay scattered about the forest on the mountain slope. The cheerful-sounding phrase "to trel" meant dragging and stacking logs by hand, in Kolyma a back-breaking and unbearable task. "Trelling" logs by hand over the mounds and along the twisting, narrow paths was beyond human strength. There was a time until 1938 when horses were used here, but horses bear up in the North less successfully than humans. Because they could not stand the "trelling" they died. And now the knife of the overseas bulldozer would come to our aid—or was it really there to help us?

None of us dared dream that he would be assigned an easy task instead of the unbearable "trelling," so hated by everyone. No. They would simply increase the daily quota of timber we had to cut. In any case, we would have to do something else, equally humiliating and despicable, as is all labor in the concentration camp. The American bulldozer would not cure our frostbitten fingers. But perhaps American "Solidol" could! Oh, Solidol, Solidol! The barrel in which this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heavy truck lubricant had been brought was instantly attacked by a crowd of *dokhodyaga.*[2] Its bottom was knocked out on the spot.

The starving prisoners said it was Lend-Lease butter. When finally a watchman was posted, less than half the barrel remained and the authorities drove off the crowd of *dokhodyaga* with shots. The lucky ones gulped down the "Lend-Lease butter," refusing to believe it was simply a truck lubricant. After all, American bread was also medicinal and tasteless except for a strange iron flavor. So all those who had succeeded in touching the Solidol licked their fingers for the next few hours, swallowing the tiniest pieces of the overseas delicacy with its rock-like taste. After all, a rock was also born not as a rock but something soft and buttery! A being, not a substance. Only in old age does a rock become substance.

Nothing happened to those who had gotten their hands into the barrel. The well-trained stomachs and bowels of Kolyma were easily able to cope with Solidol. As to what was left over, a guard was posted there since Solidol happened to be food for machines, machines being much more important to the state than people.

So here was one of those beings that came to us from beyond the ocean. Three hundred men passionately envied the prisoner sitting at the steering wheel of the American tractor. They envied Grinya Lebedev. There were tractor operators among the prisoners more skilled than Lebedev, but all were "Article 58" cases, *"literik," "lityorka."*[3] Grinya Lebedev happened to be a common criminal, a patricide to be exact. Each one of the three hundred envied his luck: to sit at the wheel of the well-oiled tractor, to "chirr" and roar through the timber-cutting area.

Timber cutting went on and on. In Kolyma it followed the beds of the streams. Here, secluded from the wind and reaching for the sun out of the darkness of deep ravines, trees grow high. Those in the wind and full light of the muddy mountain slopes are broken and deformed as they lean toward the sun, exhausted in their perpetual struggle for a piece of thawed-out soil. The trees on the mountain slopes look fit for a museum of strange and freaklike phenomena of nature. Only in the dark canyons of the mountain riverbeds do the trees gain in height and strength. Like prospecting, lumbering sticks to gold-bearing streams. A stream, a scoop, a prospecting pan, temporary quarters, a violent destructive push during which the lumberer denudes river and countryside of timber for three centuries to come while the prospector empties them of gold forever.

While reforestation was feasible elsewhere, in Kolyma, where larch trees take three hundred years to mature, it was impractical in the wartime rush sparked by intensive Lend-Lease activity.

Many logs as well as sawed and piled-up wood remained in the forest. The snow hid any number of heavy logs that had fallen when prisoners could not lift them onto their lean and fragile shoulders. Feeble human hands, even dozens of such hands, could not raise a two-meter log to the shoulders of others, to be lugged tens of meters over mounds, ditches, and pits. Plenty of wood had to be abandoned during the backbreaking toil of "trelling." But now the bulldozer would give us a helping hand.

In Kolyma, however, the bulldozer's first assignment on Russian soil would be completely different. We all watched as the bulldozer turned left and began to climb the terrace, the ledge of rock where the old road led to the camp cemetery. We had been driven to work this way hundreds of times.

For the last few weeks it had not occurred to me why they had been leading us to work by another route instead of along the familiar path, well-trodden by the heels of the armed escorts and by the "chunis" or thin rubbers

[2] A camp prisoner, exhausted, desperate, unable to work and doomed to die soon.

[3] Concentration camp terms denoting political prisoners; Article 58 means "counterrevolutionary" activity; different types of such activities are labeled by letters (*litera*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which the prisoners wore on their bare feet. The new route was twice as long as the old one and full of hills we had to climb up and down. We were exhausted before we reached our place of work, but nobody asked why another route was being taken. It must be so; such was the order. We crawled on all fours, clutching at the rocks and bloodying our fingers.

But now I saw and understood. I thanked God for giving me the time and strength to see this.

The mountain slope was stripped bare. The snow, still not deep enough, was blown away by the wind. The last of the tree stumps was uprooted. Dynamite charges set under the biggest stumps sent them flying. The smaller stumps were uprooted with crowbars and still smaller ones were simply pulled out by hand. Thus the mountain was stripped bare and converted into a gigantic stage for the performance of a concentration camp mystery play.

A stone pit, the common prison grave, full of preserved corpses, had been reopened by the disappearance of the topsoil. The bodies had slid down the mountain slope, revealing the secret of Kolyma.

In Kolyma dead bodies are not committed to earth but to Stone. Stone is more reliable than earth, especially when fortified by Permafrost. It both preserves and exposes secrets. Each of our dear ones who had perished in Kolyma, each who had been shot or beaten to death, or wasted away from hunger, might have been identified decades later. There were no gas ovens in Kolyma. Corpses lay waiting in the doubly hardened realm of Stone and Permafrost.

Whole teams of prisoners in the gold fields in 1938 were put to work digging such graves, incessantly drilling, blowing up, deepening the huge, grey, cold stone pits. It was an easy task to dig graves then. There were no stiff assignments, no daily quotas designed to kill people and calculated on a fourteen-hour work day. It was easier digging graves than standing in the ice-cold water of the gold mine wearing only rubber "chunis" on one's feet, working at the camp's major enterprise, removing the primary metal.

These huge, stonepit graves were filled to overflowing with dead bodies. Corpses that had not decayed, naked skeletons covered with filthy skin, scratched raw and bitten all over by lice.

Neither the Stone nor the North would let the corpses into their womb. Finally, yielding to force, defeated and humiliated, the Stone had promised to keep its secret, but harsh winters, hot summers, the winds and the rain, at work for six years, had wiped away the secret by casting the corpses forth from the Stone. The earth had opened its mouth to reveal its underground storerooms. In Kolyma not only gold was hidden, not only lead, wolfram, and uranium, but also preserved human bodies.

Perhaps straining after resurrection, these human bodies had shifted down the slope. Much earlier, from the other side of the stream, I had seen objects moving, some obstructed by branches and rocks. Seen through the sparse, hewn-out forest I had thought they were logs still to be piled up.

Now that the mountain lay stripped bare its secret was revealed. The grave had yawned and the corpses moved down the slope. Near the tractor trail a new, huge, mass grave had been carved out. By whom? No one had been sent from the barracks to do it. It was a very large grave. If all my comrades and I should freeze to death, or however we were to die, there would be enough room for us in this new grave.

The bulldozer was shoveling the corpses together, thousands of skeletonlike corpses, frozen stiff. Everything in a state of preservation—crooked fingers, gangrenous toes discharging puss, stumps of frostbitten limbs, skin scratched raw and blood-stained, eyes inflamed with hunger.

My exhausted mind tried to understand. How could such an enormous grave exist in this area? It seemed to me there were no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gold fields here. I should know; I was an old-timer in Kolyma. But later it occurred to me that I knew only a small part of this world, a scrap defined by the barbed-wire zone and watchtowers that reminded one of Moscow's tentlike period of architecture. Moscow skyscrapers are watchtowers guarding Muscovite prisoners. Which guard house towers came first, the Kremlin's or those in the concentration camps?

I realized that I knew only a very small, insignificant part of this world. I became aware that a mere 20 kilometers away might stand the hut of survey geologists, prospecting for uranium or gold that might one day employ thirty thousand additional prisoners. Deep in the mountains much is hidden.

Then I remembered putting out grass fires and, by contrast, the intense blooming of the *taiga* in summer whose foliage together with the grass may hide all human actions, good or bad. I remembered that grass is more forgetful than man. If I forget, surely the grass will. But Stone and Permafrost will not.

Grinya Lebedev, patricide, operated a tractor skillfully. With confidence he drove the well-oiled American tractor. Grinya Lebedev performed his task thoroughly, pushing the corpses up to the edge of the grave, then the shiny knifeshield of the bulldozer shoved them into the pit and he withdrew to "trel."

The authorities had decided that the first job of the tractor acquired by American Lend-Lease would not be a simple job in the woods, but a more important one.

The work was over. The bulldozer had pushed a mass of rocks and pebbles over the new grave under which the corpses were once again concealed beneath Stone. But they had not vanished.

The bulldozer was approaching us. Grinya Lebedev, common criminal, patricide, did not deign to look at us, Article 58 prisoners. Grinya Lebedev had carried out his official assignment. Pride and satisfaction with a job well-done were clearly written on Grinya's stony face.

The bulldozer roared past us; not a scratch, not a mark on its mirrorlike knife.

Translated by MARK LIWSZYC □

"I appeal to you with respect and hope."

ANDREI SAKHAROV

[At the Award Dinner of the Social Democrats, U.S.A. on February 1st, the courageous Soviet dissenter Andrei Sakharov, was presented with the Norman Thomas Freedom Award in memory of the great American civil libertarian.

In accepting his award in absentia, Andrei Sakharov described the "extremely grave situation" facing the Soviet dissenters and appealed for support in the West for a six point program to aid their cause. (space does not permit us to reprint the program here but it can be obtained from the address listed below.)

Public support in the West and the bravery of Sakharov and others keep the dissident struggle in the Soviet Union alive. This support must grow. It is a matter of life and death!

Bayard Rustin, Chairman
Dr. Robert Wallace Gilmore, Treasurer
Andrei Sakharov Campaign
sponsored by Social Democrats, U.S.A. 12th Floor, 112 E. 19th St., N.Y., N.Y., 10003 (212) 674-3700

Yes, I want to help the campaign and I will ask my organization to become active in it.

☐ **Enclosed is $_____ to reprint and distribute this statement as widely as possible, and to build public suport for the Soviet dissenters.**

☐ **Please send me information about the Soviet dissenters and suggestions for activities on how to help in my community.**

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
(Please make checks payable to Andrei Sakharov Campaign)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frank Marquart

From a Labor Journal

Unions & Radicals in the Depression Years

Frank Marquart is one of the true, and the best, veterans of American radicalism. He lived through the early days of the struggle for union organization in Detroit, was active in a variety of left-wing groups, and later worked as an educational director in UAW locals. He has recently been writing his memoirs under the title of Labor Journal, *and from them we excerpt the following pages.*—ED.

With the depression that followed World War I, Detroit became a beehive of radical activity. Splits occurred in the Socialist party, with some of the members flocking into the Communist party and others forming new groups, like the Proletarian University or the Marxian Club. Also making themselves heard in those days were the Socialist Labor party, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Anarchists, and free-lance radicals too individualistic to fit into any group. Some groups conducted forums of their own, like the Proletarian University, which was formed by Al Renner, John Keracher, and Dennis Batt. The Proletarian University also sponsored classes and published a magazine, copies of which can still be found in the University of Michigan Labor Archives. The Proletarian University developed factions and splits, and eventually Batt, Renner, and Keracher formed the Proletarian party. And now I want to say something about a gentle anarchist woman to whom I owe a lasting debt of gratitude. Miss Haug was a retired schoolteacher; I met her for the first time when she delivered a lecture on geology to a socialist audience. She offered to teach English to a group of young socialists; not one of us had completed grade school and we were hungry for some formal education. One day she said to us: "Why don't you fellows work your way through college? A college education will equip you to make a better contribution to the radical movement." She offered to coach us in English, mathematics, and other studies so we could enter high school and go on to college. I will never forget what pains she took to help me in Algebra. How I stumbled when I read passages from Macbeth aloud! Thanks to her I enrolled in the high school that, in the fall of 1921, was connected with the Michigan State Normal College, now Eastern Michigan University, and also took some courses at the college. I had little money but did not need much, for I earned my meals by working as a busboy in a restaurant.

When my first college year ended, I returned to Detroit and found a job at Cadillac Motor Company grinding cylinders. I saved my money and returned to school in the fall. At the close of the second semester I became very ill, so fatigued and listless that I drank endless cups of strong coffee to keep going. When exams were completed, I consulted a local doctor. He said there was nothing to worry about: "You are run down, just take it easy for a few days and you'll

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

snap out of it." But I didn't snap out of it. One morning I saw specks of blood in my phlegm. So I went back to the doctor. This time he diagnosed the trouble as "a chest cold" and gave me more pills. How different my life might have been if that doctor had ordered a chest X-ray! But he didn't, not even when I saw him for the third time and reported I was losing weight. When I returned to Detroit I did not have sense enough to go to a good hospital for a checkup. Instead, I followed a pattern I was to continue all through the rest of the 1920s. I would get a job in a factory, work until fatigue would overtake me—and then "take a few days off." Or I would quit my job and not look for another one until my money was running low.

I think it was in 1925 that the motor companies found a way to eliminate cylinder grinding; some ingenious engineer invented a honing system and one man could hone 12 cylinders in the time it used to take to grind one. I hired out as a honer in the Hupp Motor Company—and lasted one night. The honing machines were equipped with six spindles, like a multiple drill press. You honed all six cylinders at one time; the spindles fed the hones into the cylinder bores automatically while a steady, fine kerosine spray kept the hones damp. The operator had to watch the job every second to see that the bores were honed to within 1000th of an inch of required size. It was piece work and I toiled furiously to keep up with the other hone workers. But one out of every three blocks that I took off my machine was rejected by the inspector, either because it was undersized or out-of-round. Every rejected block had to be put on the machine for rehoning. When the shift ended, my clothes were soaked with kerosine and I was so aching-tired that when I sat down in the streetcar I fell into a deep sleep and the conductor had to wake me at the end of the line—far past my stop. It required several days for me to recover from that ordeal. Then I looked for a job elsewhere.

Volumes have been written about the alienated factory worker, about speedup, about the monotony and boredom of the assembly line. I have read books on the subject by sociologists and industrial psychologists. From such studies I gained new theoretical insights, but they were pale compared to my gut memories of what it was like to be an auto production worker in the '20s. Picture the scene on a Baker streetcar when it was filled with Ford Rouge workers who came off the second shift around midnight: most of those lucky enough to get seats fell asleep almost as soon as they sat down. Many of those who had to stand, fell asleep on their feet, swaying back and forth, while holding onto the car straps. I remember what agonies I suffered every time I worked on the night shift. I couldn't sleep in the daytime; I couldn't eat, I always felt in a daze.

Once I worked in the ring-gear department of the General Motors Gear and Axle plant on Holbrook Avenue. It was a 12-hour shift, from six in the evening until six in the morning, with a half hour off for lunch. The job was timed so that the operator had to work every minute of every hour, with no rest periods and no fatigue-time allowance whatsoever. I was running an internal grinder; every gear had to be ground to plug-gage size. My right hand burned with raw blisters from forcing the gage into the gears. We ate lunch in a large room supplied with benches. Like so many of the other workers, I gulped down a sandwich and a cup of coffee—and lay on the floor to sleep until the whistle called us back to work.

One night I had machine trouble and fell behind in production. The straw boss, a subhuman pusher who had the authority to hire and fire, bellowed like a bull. When I tried to explain that I had machine trouble, he roared: "I don't give a damn what you had, you get out production or you get fired—that's the rule around here, and no goddamn excuses!" I removed my shop apron, shut

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

down my machine, bundled up my tools, punched out my time card and walked out of the plant. When I got to the gate the watchman told me that he could not let me out without a pass. I told him I had quit and wanted to go home. "If I let you through this gate without a pass I'll get fired, you know that," he told me. So I went back into the plant and asked the straw boss for a pass. "Pass my ass, you get no goddamn pass from me." I told him flatly I would not work on the machine and he told me just as flatly that he would see me in hell before he would give me a pass. I went to the lunch room, curled up on a bench and promptly fell asleep. But I did not sleep long. The straw boss came in and roared: "This ain't no hotel, no sleeping here!" Then I went to the toilet and sat on the stool until the whistle blew in the morning.

After that experience I made up my mind to quit production work forever and go into the toolroom. I hired out as a tool-grinder in a small tool-and-die plant on Fort Street. I think I was able to stick it out for about two weeks before the foreman told me I was too slow and he'd have to let me go. I worked in at least a dozen such small shops before I acquired enough competence to perform any grinding job in the toolroom, whether external, internal, or surface grinding.

In those days the auto industry had its model-change layoff period in late summer. The workers referred to the layoff as their "starvation vacation." Looking back at those times I wonder how the laid-off auto workers with families to support managed to live during those payless weeks. There was no unemployment compensation to tide them over until they returned to work. And when they did work they never earned more than just enough to keep the family going from payday to payday. Those were the days of the "suitcase brigade." When the auto companies were rushing like mad to get out production, they would advertise for help in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana. "Hillbillies" lugging cardboard suitcases would travel to Detroit by bus and get jobs on the assembly lines, leaving their families behind. Living in cheap rooming houses and eating in cheap restaurants, they managed to accumulate "a stake" by the time the model-change layoff season arrived—then they would return to their farms. During changeover the industry would tool up in preparation for the new models, and tool-and-die shops worked overtime. I always refused to work overtime because the long hours were too much of a drain on my strength. The foreman would threaten to fire me but when I still refused, he tolerated me because tool-grinders were not easy to replace during tool-up season. Sometimes I would work only three days a week, and spend the other days in Belle Isle Park reading. I can remember times when I would take the streetcar to work in the morning, get as far as the factory gate, and then suddenly decide to spend the day on Belle Isle.

I had an incentive to read, not a material incentive, but a different kind. The Marxian Club sponsored study classes, debates, and informal discussions. Morris Field, who later became an able union negotiator on the International UAW staff, conducted a class in economics, using *Das Kapital* as the text. I taught a class in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific,* and I would spend hours preparing my lessons, especially the lessons pertaining to the section on metaphysics and dialectics. I would go to the library and take out books that would facilitate my understanding of what Engels was driving at—then go to Belle Isle and "bone up" on the subject. There was a kind of intellectual rivalry among us in that club. We spurned "bourgeois values" in terms of material status, but we had our own kind of snobbery. We considered ourselves "well-informed." So-and-so was said to be well-informed about economics, another about history, another about literature, and some fancied themselves well-informed about everything. I used to go on reading sprees. For a while it would be Bertrand Russell. Then it would be Karl Kautsky. Sometimes I would go in for imaginative literature—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plays by Shaw, Ibsen, O'Neill, novels by Dreiser, Anatole France, Tolstoy, etc.

Not far from our Marxian Club was Greenfield's restaurant on Woodward Avenue. We would spend hours there, discussing, arguing, pontificating over coffee or tea. Members of the Communist party dubbed us "intellectual snobs" and referred to us as "Tea Drinkers" because there were a number of Englishmen in our group. Our opponents said we expected to achieve the revolution drinking tea. We in turn called them apostles of dictatorship because they approved of everything the Bolsheviks did. Today you won't find young factory workers boning up on De Leon, Marx, and all that. Today the motivation is different; many young workers enroll in labor courses sponsored by university labor-relations institutes. None of these workers carries a thumb-worn copy of Herbert Spencer's *First Principles* in his pocket as did the young Welshman in our Marxian Club. Today they carry briefcases containing class materials on steward training, collective bargaining, labor law, etc. And their aim is not knowledge for its own sake, but training for union posts. We young radicals in the 1920s used to denounce "AFL Piecards." We had no way of knowing that our study-class and soapbox experience would someday enable us to become piecards ourselves. . . .

The old Automobile, Aircraft and Vehicle Workers succumbed to the postwar depression in the early '20s. Later the CP picked up the pieces and formed the Auto Workers Union, and tried to direct it along industrial union lines. By that time I was firmly convinced that auto workers needed a union and I volunteered to help the CP in any way I could. I would take a bundle of their leaflets into the shop and furtively place them near the time clock so that each worker could take one when he punched his time card. It was generally a leaflet explaining the aims of the AWU and inviting workers to come to a scheduled meeting.

What lively, fresh shop papers they used to put out! There was the "Hudson Worker," the "Packard Worker," the "Ford Worker," etc. Those papers had the smell of machine oil about them. They fairly bristled with on-the-spot shop reports, exposing health hazards in the paint shop, describing brutal acts of this or that foreman, citing facts and figures about speedup on specific operations, revealing how workers got shortchanged by a bonus system no one could ever figure out. Today most papers put out by UAW locals are usually filled with canned news about state and national politics, officers' reports, and petty shop gossip.

Those AWU papers were read eagerly by the workers. One day during lunch hour an AWU organizer set up a soapbox in front of the Hudson Motor Company and proceeded to give a talk. He did not get an enthusiastic response. I was working at Hudson Motor at the time and I remember how workers, leaning out of windows, made snide remarks: "Hey, Buddy, what's your racket?" "Why don't you make an honest living for a change?" "If you sounded off like that in Russia, they'd shoot you!" etc., etc. The organizer spoke only about ten minutes, then handed out copies of the "Hudson Worker." The headline featured the dubious bonus system at Hudson Motor. I listened to the comments: "By God, that's just how it is—you never can figure out how the hell much you are going to make by that bonus system. The harder you work the more you think you are going to earn and then when payday comes, the less you get!" They laughed about what the paper had to say concerning a certain foreman: "It's about time someone put out the dirt on that son of a bitch!" The paper spoke to them about the experiences that impinged on their nerves, muscles, and brains. The paper said what they felt. How did the editors get their news "hot from the shops"? Did the CP have cells in the plant, people who worked in the various departments and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reported their observations? Or did the AWU have contacts in the form of nonpolitical workers who belonged to the union and served as reporters? I don't know. But I do know that those papers played a significant role in preparing auto workers' minds for the union thrust that was to come in the days ahead.

Of all the radical groups active in the 1920s, only the CP and IWW were convinced that the auto industry could be organized along industrial union lines. I doubt that the Socialist party, or the Proletarian party or any of the lesser sects held out any hope for effective unionism in auto. The leaders of the Proletarian party contended that only a small portion of auto workers could be organized, and those would have to join the AFL–machine workers in the Machinists Union, sheet metal workers in the Sheet Metal Workers Union, and so on. The PP argued that while industrial unionism was the only kind that made sense in the auto industry, it was not practical. The work force was composed of so many different nationalities: Poles, Italians, English, Germans, Slavs, and many others, not to mention the "Hillbillies," "Swadbusters," and "Crackers" from such places as Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana —workers lured to Detroit factories by the "high wages." How could a work force composed of such dissimilar elements ever be brought together to tackle such corporate giants as General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler?

When William Green, president of the AFL, wrote to the Automobile Manufacturers Association asking for a conference to weigh the pros and the cons of unionism, the arrogant auto barons did not even deign to reply. They were determined to maintain an open-shop industry and to this end they employed industrial spies to ferret out any and all workers who "talked union." Past efforts to organize an industrial union in auto had failed dismally. The old AAVW floundered and died and the AWU was actually getting nowhere—it was a paper union. And in those days we all knew that "the AF of Hell" was not interested in organizing a strong industrial union because such an organization would threaten the entrenched jobs of many craft-union leaders.

"How Can Auto Workers Be Organized into a Strong Industrial Union?" I heard this proposition debated by Al Renner and a CP member, with Renner taking the negative. I heard the same question thrashed out time and again by radicals in their meetings. I agreed with those who contended that the organizing attempts of the AWU would prove as futile as the labors of Sisyphus. And yet I believed that radicals should at all times advocate industrial unionism in the auto industry. This was my theme at street meetings.

In those days the Communist International pursued its "Third Period" policies—and what crazy antics those policies called for! In America the CP declared war against the AFL and sought to win the membership away from the top-ranking leaders by calling for a "United Front From Below!" The AFL leadership was castigated as "flunkies of the bosses," and the CP sought to organize dual unions in coal, auto, textile, and I don't know how many other industries. I think they were most successful in textile areas of the South, where they conducted some bitter strikes. The CP leaders were utterly ruthless in their dealings with rival organizations, such as the Proletarian party, which professed to be the only sound communist organization in the United States. (When the Marxian Club disbanded, I joined the Proletarian party.)

How well I remember what happened one evening in 1927 when a group of organizations held a mass meeting in Cadillac Square, demanding immediate freedom for Sacco and Vanzetti, who were slated for execution that night. Among the sponsoring organizations were the Central Body of the AFL, the Communist party, Proletarian party, the Anarchists, and the Wobblies. The Arrangements

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Committee received permission from the police to hold the meeting, after pledging there would be no disturbance. A large crowd gathered and everything seemed to be going according to plan. I was one of the speakers and found myself addressing the largest audience I had ever faced in my life. Also speaking was Frank Martel, president of the AFL Central Body, and during his remarks he called upon the workers to "join the union of your craft." The most rousing speech was given by a fiery Italian Anarchist, whose oratory brought the Italians in the crowd to a pitch of emotional frenzy.

When the chairman was about to bring the meeting to a close, the leader of the CP contingent gave a prearranged signal for action. The Party boys ran to a nearby truck, grabbed placards and responded to the order: "On to City Hall!" The police, who had been posted at strategic sections, quickly formed a cordon around City Hall and the inevitable happened—confrontation between Communists and police.

Frank Martel lashed out at the CP leader who gave the order to march on City Hall. "What's the matter with you damn fools, you gave your word that you would abide by the agreement with the police; now we'll pay hell before we ever get another permit to hold a street demonstration. And why in hell march on City Hall? Do you bastards want to rape the scrubwomen over there!" But the Communists achieved their aim. Within a few hours the *Detroit Free Press* hit the streets with screaming headlines about the RIOT!

Despite their "Third Period" absurdities, the Communists helped pave the way for industrial unionism. By speaking at factories, by distributing thousands of papers, leaflets, pamphlets, and other materials at shop gates, the Communists performed the kind of spade work that paid off when the CIO organizing drive got under way in the 1930s. Though small in numbers, the AWU served as a training ground for workers who became shop-level leaders in later years.

To a lesser degree, organizations like the PP, IWW, and SP, and such offshoots of the Communist party as the Trotskyites, Lovestoneites, each and all afforded training for people who were destined to take active roles in building the UAW. The Proletarian party, for instance, held classes in public speaking as well as in labor history, economics, and, of course, the "Socialist Classics." Soapboxing in those days was an institution in Detroit and some of the speakers in time became forceful orators. Every Saturday evening we used to hold forth at Woodward Street and Temple; the opening speaker would sound off for 15 minutes or so, followed by another speaker who was followed by another. From practice, the speakers would learn how to use their voices effectively, how to parry questions, and to handle hecklers. During the week we would speak on Detroit's East Side at Hillger Street and Jefferson and also at Hastings and Erskine.

During the '20s Hastings Street was still called "Kike Town," although the Jews were rapidly moving into better areas, and Hastings soon became part of the Black Belt. I remember that I had more success than the other speakers in holding the attention of Negroes in the audience—and for good reason: I belabored the auto companies for their hiring practices; I would draw on endless examples of flagrant discrimination in the shop and would ask such rhetorical questions as: "Is there any reason why Negroes should not be promoted to cushion building? Is there any reason why they should be chained to the foundry or to mopping toilets?" The Negroes would respond to my questions in chorus: "He's right! He's right!" I don't think I ever told my black audience that white workers were just as opposed to extending job promotion to Negroes as the employers were. I suspect my radical bias made me concentrate all my denunciation on "the bosses." But I knew only too well how filled with racial prejudice white workers were, especially white Southerners. I knew that one of the foremen I worked under in Timken Axle was an active Klansman. The Klan was strong in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eastern Michigan in those days. The workers in my department were sympathetic to the Klan: "The Klan keeps Communists and niggers in their place!"

In January 1929 I got a job tool-grinding in the Detroit Lubricator Company on Trumbull Avenue. In that year "prosperity" reached its peak, yet there was so much unemployment in Detroit that the *Free Press* carried pictures of job-seekers massed at the employment offices of the Ford Motor Company. I was still single, still working three days a week, just long enough to earn board and room and expenses. I had no car, not even a cheap jalopy, and I didn't want any, for I believed that the more material things I possessed and the longer I had to work to pay for them, the less free time I would have at my disposal. What did I do with my free time? I spent most of it in the library reading. Some days I would hang around the AWU hall and discuss union strategy and tactics with the organizers. Or I would get into heated arguments about the Russian Revolution; they would quote Lenin and Stalin and I would quote Kautsky and Luxemburg. Sometimes I would go to the IWW hall and discuss the One Big Union with Wobblies. I always got along amicably with the Wobblies, even though we disagreed on basic theory. Unlike CP members, the Wobblies treated opponents as opponents and not as enemies. To the CP, all other radical parties and groups were "social fascists" and counter-revolutionists. All radical outfits addressed themselves to "The American Working Class" but in those days the great bulk of the American workers were not even union-conscious, much less class-conscious. How they used to laugh at me when I predicted a depression! We radicals knew that a depression was on the way, but none of us thought it would come so soon nor be so severe and last so long.

When the stock-market crash rocked Wall Street in the fall of 1929, layoffs in the auto industry were not long in coming. There was much unemployment and suffering in Detroit that winter. In March 1930 the Communists organized a "Hunger March" in many cities, including Detroit. In that city, people responded to the call by the thousands. Downtown was so jam-packed with people that some of the large plate-glass windows in big department stores were pushed in. Mounted police ordered the crowd back, but there was no place to move, so the cops used their clubs on heads and shoulders. Never before nor since in this country were the Communists so successful in "calling the masses into the streets."

In another year, Detroit, being a one-industry town, was so paralyzed that it became known as "The City of the Dead." Nearly all of my friends and relatives were unemployed in the spring of 1930, and most of them were not to find jobs again for several years. The Detroit Lubricator plant slackened to a three-day week, and that suited me perfectly. I spent most of my spare time in radical activity—soapboxing, attending Marxist study classes, and passing out shop papers for the AWU.

I think it was in June 1930 that Lubricator laid me off. For about two weeks I looked for work, but finally gave up the search, realizing it was futile. I knew there were many more jobbing shops and parts plants in Cleveland than in Detroit, so I decided to try my luck in that city. As in Detroit, so in Cleveland: looking for a job was an exercise in futility. During the day I looked for work and in the evening I became a "free-lance soapboxer." Cleveland had a free-speech tradition that went back to the days of its famous liberal mayor, Tom Johnson. The large downtown square was available to any group, party, or individual seeking an audience. I would speak for short periods, call for questions, and then take up a collection. In this way I was able to supplement what little money I still had left. I lived in cheap rooming houses and ate in the cheapest restaurant, and with each passing day my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

savings dwindled. What to do? When a man has no money and can't find a job, he either becomes a bum and vegetates in one place or becomes a hobo and moves on. I knew there was a large General Motors plant as well as smaller parts plants in Buffalo, New York. So I went to the Nickel Plate Railroad, caught a freight train and headed for that city.

Every employment office I went to in Buffalo was filled with job-seekers, but of course, no one was ever hired. When a man is not only unemployed but also broke, he grasps for straws. When someone in Buffalo told me that a machine shop in Corning, N.Y., needed tool-grinders, I lost no time getting to the Erie Railroad and catching a freight train going East. Every Erie freight train was loaded with hobos in those days; they rode in empty box cars, on top of box cars, in gondolas, on the running boards of oil tankers, and on flat cars. Some of them, like myself, rode in hopes of eventually finding a job, others rode for the sheer sake of traveling. As one hobo told me, "When you know damn well you can't find a job, it's a hell of a lot better to ride the rods than to sit home brooding."

I soon discovered that hoboing was not the romantic experience depicted in Jack London's "On the Road." There is nothing romantic about sleeping in public parks, police stations, and in box cars. And knocking on back doors, offering to do chores in return for something to eat, is not exactly a dignified way of making a living. I preferred asking a storekeeper for a can of pork and beans and a loaf of day-old bread and a little loose coffee. Then I would go to the nearest hobo jungle, make coffee in a tin can, hollow out the loaf of bread and fill it with the pork and beans.

I did not find work in Corning, nor in all the other towns along the Erie Railroad in New York and New Jersey. Several times when riding freights through farmland I would get off and apply for work as a farmhand. Eager to have his hay off the ground and into the barn before the rain came, a farmer would hire me. Pitching hay all day would just about do me in. The farmer paid me $2 a day plus "room and board." The room was a hayloft and the board consisted of bread and potatoes.

One farm I worked on was operated by Harry Miles, who once owned the farm but was now running it on a crop-sharing basis for the bank that took it over in lieu of mortgage payments. Poor Miles! Living with him were his two daughters, one of whom was the mother of an illegitimate child and the other was a divorcée who had custody of her two-year-old daughter. The two sisters fought like snarling cats. I can still hear Minnie's shrill cry: "Damn you Helen, you and your brat ain't gonna sleep in my bed anymore, buy your own damn bed!" And Miles would plead: "Now, now, Minnie, that ain't a way to talk to your sister. . . ." I witnessed rural poverty at its worst. Miles, his daughters and their children lived on potatoes and green vegetables—no milk, no meat or cheese ever. I liked Miles, he was a kindly man, but terribly defeated. I was anything but a "handyman" around his farm and he observed my awkward work movements with amused tolerance. "Hell's fire man, you ain't ever gonna be a farmer, you can't even learn to hold a pitchfork right!"

After two weeks of pitching hay, hoeing corn, and subsisting on a malnutrition diet, I bid Miles and his daughters good-bye and caught an Erie freight train heading West. I rode to Syracuse and spent several days there tramping for work. I was like the work stiff the Wobblies sang about: "Tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping, there's nothing doing here for you!" I knew that the Proletarian party had a branch in Rochester, N.Y., so one afternoon I climbed up on the tender of a New York Central passenger train and rode into that city. I contacted members of the Proletarian party and one of them offered to let me stay in his home "until

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you land a job." Although Rochester had many diversified industries, factory jobs were not to be had. Western New York State is famous for its rich fruit belt and I arrived in Rochester at a time when farmers needed pickers. I forget how much I received for each basket of peaches, pears, and apples I picked, but while the season lasted I earned enough to pay for my room and board. When the harvest season ended, I picked up odd jobs: for a while I tried selling vacuum cleaners from house to house, but I soon learned that housewives were not about to spend money on vacuum cleaners when a broom would do. So I peddled brooms—floor brooms, whisk brooms, brushes. I would buy my wares from the broom factory wholesale and sell them at retail price. I looked upon every housewife who came to the door as either a prospective customer or a prospective employer. If she did not need a broom I would ask if she needed something done around the house—a tree chopped down, perhaps, or the yard cleaned up or whatever. In this way I was able to earn a few extra dollars.

In the winter of 1930–31 I was lucky enough to find a job waiting on tables in the Ratskeller of the Rochester Labor Lyceum. During the prohibition era the Ratskeller was frequented by Germans every Saturday night; they came to eat German food, dance to German music, and drink good German beer. I worked strictly for tips and was able to earn enough on Saturday nights to pay for my room and for the food I would buy and cook during the week. Rochester has always been noted for its cultural activities—the Eastman School of Music, a fine symphony orchestra, and an excellent library. I spent my days during the winter browsing in the library, where it was warm and clean and light and quiet. I did not study systematically, but read at random: newspapers, magazines, fiction, history. The library was my place of escape; reading kept me from brooding over the insecurity of prolonged unemployment. The Proletarian party conducted classes in the Labor Lyceum two evenings each week. The text used in one of those classes was *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,* by Friedrich Engels. To prepare for this class, I spent hours reading up on the various family forms and marriage customs of different historical periods. How seriously we took ourselves in that small sectarian outfit called the Proletarian party! We were only a vestpocket study group, yet we had all the "correct" answers. We always ended up by taking a "position" on each and every important event of the time. We rationalized every twist and turn of the Third International, while at the same time criticizing the American Communist party for carrying out the policies dictated by that International. And as for Stalin's genocidal policies toward the Russian peasantry, we still believed and contended that the capitalist press greatly exaggerated the mass starvation resulting from those policies, and we insisted that the only victims were the rich peasants, the "kulaks" who sabotaged socialist reconstruction, and therefore received the punishment they deserved.

We prided ourselves on being the only true revolutionary party in America. We were convinced our theories were right because they were grounded on the Marxist–Leninist principles of the class struggle, historical materialism, and the "law of value." Thanks to this law of value, capitalism was floundering in a catastrophic depression from which it could never recover, so consequently, all measures adopted by government and business to save the economic system were doomed to failure. Like a religious sect waiting for the Second Coming, we were certain the revolution would come in our time.

One day in the spring of 1931, Cy Ware, a member of the Proletarian party, who worked as a waiter in Iola Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Rochester, told me the head chef needed another "kitchen hand." He warned: "The work will be hard. Oscar, the chef, drives himself hard and drives his help even harder." I immediately applied for the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

job and was lucky enough to get hired, at $30 a month "and all the food you can eat." Yes, the work was hard. My job called for helping the first cook, which meant that I had to lift heavy pots and pans of food, mop the floor, carry kettles to the dishwasher, lift crates of vegetables and large boxes of meat —in short, do all the chores that are expected of a cook's helper in a large institution. Kitchen hands got one day off a month. We would work from six in the morning until one in the afternoon, get two hours off, and then work again from three to six in the evening. I was not used to working that hard and that steady. I always felt terribly tired and literally "ran on my nerves," consuming endless cups of coffee and chain-smoking cigarettes. The produce scale in the storeroom showed me that I was losing weight, yet it never occurred to me that there might be something organically wrong. I would spend my precious "free day" at the beach, little realizing that lying in the sun was the worst thing I could have done, in view of what was ailing me.

AFTER I had worked at Iola about three months, Oscar called the kitchen staff together and informed us that Dr. Bridge, the superintendent, had ordered all kitchen hands to have an X-ray taken, "as a precautionary measure." I recall arguing with Oscar about this. "It's silly for us to get a chest X-ray. How could I ever heave those heavy kettles of soup bones on the stove if I had TB?" Oscar said orders were orders and "if Dr. Bridge orders an X-ray you better damn well get an X-ray!" I even told the X-ray technician she was wasting her time "taking my picture."

The next morning I heard the bad news. I still recall the sickening sensation in my stomach as I listened to Dr. Bridge's report: "You have a small cavity in your right lung. The scar tissue on your lung indicates that you had TB on and off over the years, but apparently you had enough resistance to hold the disease in check in that area." When I asked him how serious my condition was and how long I might have to "take the cure" his answer was succint: "There is no way of knowing; all we can tell you is that time and rest will eventually cure you."

So my status in the sanitarium changed from cook's helper to hospital patient. No longer did I have to heave heavy kettles and mop the floor. I took to my new life as a duck to water. No economic worries for me now! Hearty meals, a comfortable bed, and endless hours of leisure for reading whatever the mood dictated. Circumstances had finally made a student of me. □

Southern Exposure

Southern Exposure.

"No More Moanin'": a special 226-page issue on people's history "born out of stubborn insistence that there is more to southern history than its mystique and magnolias."

Feature articles based on oral interviews:

Sharecropper Organizing
UAW Sitdown Strike, Atlanta, 1936
Oral History of Slavery
East Tennessee Coal Mining Battles
Gastonia Textile Strike, 1929
Zora Neale Hurston: A Profile
Knoxville Race Riot, 1919
Vincent Harding: White, Negro, and Black History

Southern Exposure is a quarterly journal of political and cultural affairs published by the Institute for Southern Studies. Indispensable for activists, scholars, and informed readers everywhere. Future issues range from southern women to land use, corporations to black politics.

enclosed is ____ for:
____ one-year subscriptions @ $8 per year.
____ copies of "No More Moanin'" @ $2.75
mail to P.O. Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

name_____
address_____
city/state_____ zip_____

"You're doing desperately needed work in recovering lost radical/labor history 'from the bottom up'. The journal is so good that it serves as a standing example of what can be done."
—Martin Duberman

"The single most important periodical that examines the regional and national realities behind southern people and southern power."
—Julian Bond

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gus Tyler

On the Limits of "Corporate Responsibility"

The current interest in "corporate responsibility" arises from a mounting concern over tensions in our society and from a recognition of the decisive role corporations play in our lives. In the next decade, there will undoubtedly be considerable movement by corporations into the social area—out of social pressures and enlightened self-interest. These acts of "corporate conscience" will be viewed by many as the answer to our most pressing social problems.

The object of this article is neither to deny the positive aspects of corporate initiative in the social area nor to discourage the development of corporate responsibility. Rather, this article seeks to explore *limits* of the corporate role—so that the nation will not shirk its collective responsibility by unloading onto the corporations that which the corporations cannot do.

The 1973 statement of the Committee on Economic Development (CED) on "Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations" recognizes the necessary limits of a company's commitment to the societal interest. "Corporations are necessarily limited," the paper points out, "by various internal constraints on what and how much they can do to improve society." In this connection, two major restraints are noted: (1) "No company of any size can willingly incur costs that would jeopardize its competitive position and threaten its survival." (2) Management must concern itself with realizing a level of profitability that its stockholders and the financial market consider to be reasonable under the circumstances.

These two constraints—both of which are compulsions bearing down on even the most socially minded executive—are of sufficient weight to slow down almost any major corporation impulse to social do-goodery. The first constraint—to stay competitive—means that a corporation cannot take on any sizable added costs that would cause it to lose out to its rival in the marketplace. Social goodwill, therefore, can operate only in that thin area of cost advantage a corporation is willing to surrender to its competitors without losing its competitive edge. The second constraint is even more compelling, for even if a corporation can *survive* against competition but appears to be offering a less than expected return on investment, that corporation will lose the confidence (support) of shareholders and the financial market. Indeed, the most immediate threat will come from a more short-run, narrow-interest, socially unconcerned operator (or operators) who will move in on the depressed company for a killing by buying up the stock, by rallying the shareholders, and by hitting the target at a moment of its disfavor in financial circles.

There are, of course, certain "social" acts corporations can perform that are also quite profitable. For instance: if the government awards contracts to run a manpower training

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

operation and pays for the effort either by direct payment out of the public coffers or by a tax rebate, a corporation can be utterly unrestrained in its service to the public. Or if communities were to abolish public schools and subsidize all education by issuing vouchers, a corporation might set up a total educational system from prekindergarten to postgraduate school and realize handsome profits. Or if the government were to award multibillion dollar contracts for cleaning up the Hudson River or the Atlantic Ocean, corporations would rush to the rich waters. Or if the government were to pay utilities to hire the "hard core," or reduce corporate taxes for doing the same, or allow some publicly regulated sector of the economy to increase its rates for the same, there would be no conflict for the corporation between self-interest and the commonweal.

But these are all cases where corporate profit coincides with a public need, where doing good means doing well. A realistic appraisal of a business corporation's social role must begin with a realistic view of what a corporation is—especially what it is in relation to the society as a whole as embodied in government.

In its opening sentence, the statement of the CED quite appropriately addresses itself to this question of the relationship between the business corporation and the society. "Business functions by public consent, and its basic purpose, is to serve constructively the needs of society—to the satisfaction of society."

The first part of this statement—business functions by public consent—is true in only a partial sense, namely, that if the public wished to deny business the right to function it could do so by outlawing a given business or by socializing all business. But, in another sense, the statement is not true, for a businessman does not have to ask for the consent of the public in order to go into business. Indeed, he needs far less consent today than in some times past when just about every trade and skill had to be licensed.

The second half of the CED statement is open to even greater question. There is little evidence, either historically or currently, that the "basic purpose" of business is "to serve constructively the needs of society." If society is served, that is a by-product. The basic purpose of a business is to serve its owners in the same way that the basic purpose of a union is to serve its members. Indeed, a business that did not, as a basic purpose, make money for its owners would soon be dead. Sometimes the basic purpose of a business may coincide with the public interest. But to assume that a corporation is—in a sense—a creature of society, created consciously to serve the needs and to respond to the will of that society is to misread the true nature of corporations.

This does not mean that a corporation can mindlessly go its own sweet way without regard for the feelings of the society; it dare not. If the society is offended too often and too deeply, it will turn its wrath upon the erring subsociety. States have, indeed, legally restricted or abolished churches, parties, unions, businesses, free masons, and chess clubs when the "society" (really the party in power) felt this to be necessary. Hence business corporations, like other associations, must be mindful of the public mood—or else.

In the explosive '60s and '70s, corporations have not been confronted with the threat of suppression or abolition by government. But they have been endangered—as have unions, universities, the military, and even government itself—by an ambience of anger, by a dissolution of the social order on which they are founded. As American society is polarized on a societal centrifuge, corporations (as well as other associations) are under compulsion to think big, at least bigger than the original traditional concern of the organization. Corporations must (like unions, colleges, political parties, churches) ask themselves: "What can I do, institutionally, to help keep this society from flying apart?

Regrettably, none of these institutions has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

complete freedom of action. Each, fatefully, is limited by the nature of its being. None is prepared consciously to commit suicide as a blood sacrifice, for the salvation of the social order. Each is motivated, in the first place, by self-preservation—by preservation of those qualities that make it what, in essence, it is.

What then is a business corporation—by its very nature? It is a profit-making enterprise. The men who organize it do so to realize profit; the people who buy stocks expect returns on investment; the financiers calculate their rates and their risks against anticipated earnings and values; the managers and executives are under duress to justify the expectations of owners, investors, lenders.

Because business corporations are what they are, must be, and should be, they really have only one constituency: the shareholders. To talk of employees, consumers, and the public-at-large as constituents is unnecessarily confusing—and even dangerously illusionary. A constituent is someone who has a voice in choosing a representative who will reflect the interests of his constituents. In that sense, the shareholder is a constituent: he elects the corporate executives who are expected to champion the interests of the shareholder—i.e., to make money. The employees, the consumers, the ecologically concerned public-at-large are not constituents: they have no voice in choosing the corporate executives. The employees, if they are unionized, are constituents of another organization, electing their own leaders to represent them. Sometimes these two constituencies—management and labor—have common interests, such as increasing the market for the product or protecting the market against foreign competition. At other times, these constituencies—management and labor—clash over how to divide the corporate income, or how to set work rules, etc. In the same manner, the consumers compose a separate constituency, although rarely do they find the kind or organized expression typified by a corporation or a union. The financial community—the banks and other lenders—have a special relationship with corporations, whereby the financier may often opt to be a constituent. In those cases where the financing institution has one or more of its men sitting on the corporate board, it is clearly a constituent—sometimes, *the* constituent.

This does not mean that the corporation, with its imperatives dictated by its nature as directed by its constituents, can disregard the other constituencies in society. As one "little republic" (to use Blackstone's appellation for a corporation) living alongside other "little republics," the corporation must work out a *modus vivendi et operandi* with its neighbors. Many of the conflicts arising between corporations and other constituencies are inherent in the corporate being. For instance, the ancient tug-of-war between management and labor is inherent in the contest over "who gets what." The friction between producer and consumer is inherent in the desire of both parties to get as much as possible for what has been put out. The more recent collision between manufacturers and the public over pollution is inherent in the corporation's need to produce as cheaply as possible and to avoid such outlays as are not necessary to the conduct of its own business.

In the last half-century, the business corporation has adjusted policies to accommodate the other constituencies. Unions have been recognized with attendant changes in wage and fringe benefit policies; consumer power has been recognized with attendant changes in product; environmentalist protest has been recognized with attendant changes in productive methods; ethnic militancy has been recognized with attendant changes in hiring and promotion policies; hard-core unemployment has been recognized with attendant changes in manpower training. While labor, consumer, environmentalist, racial minority, or jobless may complain that the cor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

porations have not gone far or fast enough, the fact remains that they have moved—and they have moved contrary to the compulsions of their impersonal corporate beings.

These various moves, arising out of the interaction between corporations and other organized forces, have generally been regarded as progressive steps in the American economy. But in one major respect—perhaps *the* major respect—there has been no progress: namely, in the area of income and wealth distribution. Here, the society has failed to effect a more equitable redistribution, despite the efforts of labor and liberal political movements and corporate expressions of concern.

Consider the facts: in 1947, the bottom fifth of the nation received 5 percent of the national income; twenty years later, in 1967, it received 5.4 percent. In 1947, the top fifth received 43 percent of the income, in 1967, it received 41.2 percent. In two decades, the changes were negliglible. These figures, supplied by the Department of Commerce, actually overstate the income of the bottom fifth and understate the income of the top fifth. Moreover, a 1968 study on the historic trend of income shares shows that there was little change in the half-century from 1910 to 1961.

The maldistribution of income is at the root of some of our most serious social problems. The most apparent of these is poverty with its attendant ills of illiteracy, disease, crime, riot. Although there has been a growing awareness of poverty in America since the early 1960s, there has also been a tendency to view this as a *racial* rather than an economic problem. It is assumed that poverty wears a black face and that a light complexion leads to affluence. This is one of those mischievous myths that have misled blacks into believing if they were white they would have money, and that have angered poverty-stricken whites who believe if they were black they would get some attention.

The facts reveal that most of the poor families in the U.S. are white: of the 5,047,000 families listed as "poor" in 1970, only 1,363,000 were black. Even in metropolitan areas, "poor" whites outnumber blacks two to one. Even in the central cities, blacks are less than 50 percent of the poor. In short, the end of racism would not be the end of poverty. If everybody in the U.S. were of the same complexion, the number living in poverty would not change appreciably.

The maldistribution of income is also at the root of "middle" America's restlessness. Median family income is about $1,000 below the official "modest but adequate" income of the Department of Labor. As inflation and taxation and, more recently, unemployment have *reduced* the weekly take-home buying power of nonsupervisory employees, they have turned bitter—revolting against taxes for welfare and even education.

Income maldistribution also intensifies our urban crises. The disorders of poverty go beyond crime and riot in the cities. They spur an illegal economy in drugs. They demand a multiplication of police, prisons, courts, firemen, hospitals, social services. They load up the city with a back-breaking payroll. At the same time, these disorders drive the more affluent out of the city—depriving the inner urban areas of funds. With the poor unable to pay, with the middle leaving or unwilling (increasingly unable) to pay, and with the rich favored by tax legislation making it unnecessary to pay, the city cannot get the funds it needs to fight for its life.

Why has there been so little, if any, progress in dealing with this central economic problem? In part, because we have been living with the illusion that income *has been* redistributed. The illusion stems from the fact that the average *standard of living* in the U.S. has been rising constantly. In 1947, for instance, the median family income (in constant 1968 dollars) was $4,716; by 1967 that income rose to $8,318 (in constant dollars), an increase of about 85 percent in real dollars.

The rise in the standard of living has taken

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place without any real *income redistribution.* What happened was that GNP (and national income) was growing more rapidly than the population. Hence there was more for everybody—rich and poor alike. In such a hopeful situation, income redistribution appeared unnecessary to those on top even if it appeared desirable to those at the bottom.

A second reason why income redistribution has not taken place is the real need in any society for some locus where large sums of capital will be gathered for purposes of investment in plants, machines, research, employment of labor, or whatever is needed to maintain and expand the economy. In a Soviet country, this accumulation of capital is the function of the state. In the U.S. accumulation is the function of the big earners whose income is so huge that they, of necessity, must revert much, if not most of it, to "production" rather than personal "consumption." When financing for the economy is not readily available, our government has repeatedly intervened actively to help by depreciation allowances, accelerated amortization, credits for research and development, subsidies, etc.

For these reasons, then, income redistribution has—in effect—been considered as neither desirable nor necessary. Over the years, the present top-heavy distribution of income has been structured into the economy by an even more top-heavy distribution of wealth. At the end of World War II, the ownership of wealth was *less* concentrated than after World War I—creating the illusion that *wealth,* as well as income, was being "democratized." By 1949, however, the movement toward increasing concentration was under way. In 1949, the top 1 percent held 21 percent of the wealth; in 1956, the top 1 percent held 26 percent; in 1962, the top 1 percent held 33.3 percent. Since these last calculations are based on estate *tax returns* it is not unreasonable to believe that the top 1 percent holds even a greater percentage than stated.

In this discussion of income and wealth, the focus has been on individuals and families rather than on corporations. The corporation, however, is an instrument—perhaps the chief instrument—through which this top-heavy distribution of income and wealth is effectuated. The corporation becomes the means of capturing massive (often monopolized) markets and the conduit for moving corporate income into *individual* hands.

The process becomes clearer when *individual* income is separated from *corporate* profits. The latter—at least as reported for tax purposes—suggest that corporate profits are not as great as imagined. But, curiously, corporate profits are often less, precisely because the incomes of individuals associated with these corporations are greater. For instance, the payment of an annual salary of a quarter-million dollars to a corporate executive is an *income* for him but is charged up as a *cost* to the corporation. His expenses, in his corporate role, are similarly treated. The money a corporation pays to a bank for funds that were borrowed is charged as a cost to the corporation and, hence, diminishes the profit. But for a man who sits on both boards—the bank and the corporation—the dividends he loses in the corporation can be picked up in the bank. Corporate income that goes toward paying off bonds held by individuals is not counted as corporate profit, but the corporation is the conduit of funds to enrich the bondholder. The corporate executive who avails himself of a stock option to make a killing in capital gains is enriched even though the *corporate* books do not, as a result, show a profit. Similarly, any gains by individuals through the sale of stock are not counted as corporate profit.

The *control* of corporations is even more concentrated than wealth and income. A man (or institution) holding 49 percent of the stock in a corporation actually has 100 percent of the control. Indeed, in a huge corporation with a widely diffused ownership, the hand that holds 25 percent or less of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stock holds the reins. This *concentrated* power is multiplied by control over such nonpersonal institutional finances as mutual funds, pension funds, trust funds, etc.

In an oversimplified cartoon of this concentrated cosmogony of income, wealth, and control, it might seem easy to instill a regnant sense of social responsibility in the corporate world. The number of people in charge of that world is relatively small. One account estimates that 100 industrial firms own about half the assets in all manufacture. The number at the pinnacles of finance should be smaller. By a process of careful enlistment, it should be possible to compose a congenial congregation of about 200 who are the real power. If they could be persuaded as to the right course for America by a faculty composed of Ralph Nader, Ken Galbraith, Charles Reich, and Billy Sunday, the job would be done.

But, alas, it is not that simple. Our problem does not stem from either the stupidity or the malevolence of our top 200. (They are likely to be better informed and better intentioned than most.) It is not the man but his stars that are to blame—those stars that compose the constellation in whose orbit he inexorably moves.

The movers of money are, in a sense, caught in the orbit of the masses they handle. This is more true today than it was a half-century ago. "In 1929 . . . fewer than half of the 200 largest non-financial corporations were under management control. Individuals, families or other identifiable groups dominated many companies through their majority or sole stock ownership." These *individuals* could exert a kind of *personal* control, allowing their corporations to express their personal cupidity, or religiosity, or social enlightenment. Today, ownership has become more *impersonal*:

> Most U.S. corporate wealth is *controlled*—not by individuals, or families, but by an alliance of management and financial institutions. . . . What is new, a contribution of the post-war years, and particularly the last decade, is the shift from individual to institutional corporate ownership. This is the era of the financial institution, not the personal investor.*

This impersonality robs the corporation of personality. The corporation becomes what it has long been legally named in some countries: a *société anonyme* a being without a name. The corporation is now twice removed from being a true *persona*: first, it was set up to be recognized under the law as a *persona ficta*; and now the persons who hid behind the *persona ficta* have been replaced by *persona ficta* called "institutions."

What are these institutions? They are mutual funds, pension funds, insurance companies, trust funds, and—above all—banks that move their own funds and manage personal and common trusts and pension funds.

Although banks play a central role in almost all of these, they are not the only money managers. But whoever the money managers are, they have one thing in common: a responsibility to serve their constituencies. In these cases, the constituents are the people (or funds) entrusted to the managers of the money. The first responsibility of the manager is to the millions of little people who buy into mutual funds, who depend in their old age on pension funds, who place their trust in the financial wisdom of a bank. Indeed, if a fund or bank manager were so spiritually inclined, he might well think of himself as the righteous servant of the people championing their cause *against* the great corporation by demanding a maximum return on the invested monies. No doubt, some money managers see themselves in this hallowed light—as makers and monitors of a people's capitalism.

This quick vivisection of the body corporate uncovers no locus for a social conscience. The corporation, like the banks, gets it funds increasingly from institutions. These institutions (banks) get their funds

* Richard J. Barber, *The American Corporation* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970), p. 20.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from other institutions, like pension funds. These pension (etc.) funds really belong in the ethical and, ultimately, legal sense to all kinds of plain people of limited means who count on proper (profitable) investment of their funds, just to have the income now or later to make ends meet. Hence, the prime business of a corporation is the business of making money for its investors—and for its managers, who must carry this risky responsibility.

In pursuit of this prime purpose, corporations do many noxious things; they plan obsolescence, pollute the environment, fool consumers, underpay labor, evade taxes, and turn out products and services that are useless or harmful. In most cases, the corporate board is not aware of the evil; in other cases, the evil is accepted as the lesser evil—as compared with closing a plant or getting wiped out by merger or bankruptcy.

But even in those cases where a corporation performs a social good—education, environmental cleanup, job training—the righteous deed becomes a commodity for which others must pay. Consider three examples:

• A public utility needs manpower at a moment when public policy urges the training of "hard-core" (racial minority) unemployed. The utility recruits in the "ghetto," trains and employs black youths. Ordinarily such a search-and-development program would have to be undertaken by the utility to get needed labor. Now, this normal operation becomes socially significant. The cost to the utility is zero. The expenditures for training are counted in when some public service commission sets the rate—and the cost is carried by the consumer. In certain cases, the employer gets government help, whether in direct funding or in tax incentives —and the cost is carried by the taxpayer. In still other cases, a corporation (utility or otherwise) will contract with government to manage a generalized manpower training program from which it, or a subsidiary, or a mother corporation will draw those with the best potential. In this case, the taxpayer not only subsidizes manpower training for a corporation (or several corporations) but also pays for the costs of a school that is run as a profit-making operation by a corporation.

• A second case. A corporation makes an expenditure to clean up a river into which it has been dumping waste. Who pays for this expenditure? If the government offers a tax incentive, then other taxpayers are paying in whole or in part for the clean-up cost. If the cost is passed onto the consumer, then he is absorbing the expenditure. If a wage and salary increase is denied, delayed, or reduced, then the employees absorb the cost. If the expenditure is not picked up in one of these or similar ways, then the corporation pays the cost out of profit—actually paying only 50 percent of the cost because final profits are divided about 50–50 with government. Given the four alternatives above—tax incentive, higher price, brake on payrolls, or cut in profits—the corporate compulsion has been to eschew the last—as is natural in the light of the corporate compulsion.

• Consider a third case of a *financial* corporation that has shown its public-spirited mien by calling for a tremendous expansion of a state's system of higher education—an unquestionable good. The state floats a bond issue underwritten by major financiers—usually organized with a *noncompetitive* syndicate. The underwriter gets his handling fee. The tax-exempt bonds he sells are bought almost exclusively by people in upper-income brackets to whom the tax break is important. Individuals in the underwriting houses (or families) can also purchase these bonds. Contractors who erect these buildings borrow from lending institutions—often the same or satellite institutions. Who pays? The students who once attended tuition free now pay a charge that is earmarked for interest and principal of the bond. Many students who cannot pay are encouraged to borrow from banks whose investment is guaranteed by the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

state. In those areas where such student-borrowing is a nuisance to the banks (because of handling charges), the bank is often pushed into this operation by the pressure of larger banks that are ultimately the chief beneficiaries of this educational venture. Meanwhile, the discomforted bank pushes to have the state absorb handling charges—at the expense of the taxpayer or the student borrower. In sum, the expanded school system is paid for by the student (in some cases many years after graduation) or by his taxpaying parent. For financial institutions the operation is pure profit.

In all three of these cases, a public good has been served: job-training, environmental protection, higher education. In each case, the corporation (nonfinancial or financial) is cast in a heroic role. Yet in each case corporate imperatives operate to perpetuate or extend the traditional maldistribution of income and wealth and power.

Because we have not, as a nation, moved toward the redistribution of wealth and income, we have made the GNP our "holy grail." An expanding GNP can do miracles; it can bring more for all; it can elevate the bottom without lowering the top; it is the substitute for class struggle; it is painless progress. Recently, the grail has begun to tarnish. First, because, despite the rise in the average standard of living, social tensions have been mounting. Second, because the future of the GNP appears limited by ecologic considerations.

Thus Alvin Shorr argues that without *income distribution* a general rise in living standards is as likely to heighten as to lessen social tensions.

> We combine in the United States a relatively rigid distribution of income with enormous pressure for achievement. The effect is that many people find it difficult to satisfy their aspirations. Moreover, the satisfaction of aspirations is regarded as competitive with other individuals and groups. As frustration is almost inevitable and the notion that frustration represents personal failure and must be resisted at all costs, the problem tends to be defined in the unfair demands or superior opportunity of others. That leads to group conflict, not to say prejudice and discrimination. In these terms, of course, we will not wipe out poverty simply by providing a specified level of living.

Hence the need for income redistribution as a way to ease group tensions.

A more recent questioning of simple "growth" as a solution to our economic problems arises out of ecologic sensitivities. Up to now, the growth of the GNP was, in and of itself, considered to be good. Growth meant more for the worker—jobs; it meant more for the consumer—goods and services; it meant more for business—profitable markets. Hence, bigger was better.

But now, as we face the possibility of limited resources, we must begin to question not simply the size but also (more significantly) the *nature* of the GNP. At present, the GNP includes many items that are socially useless or downright noxious; yet their manufacture, packaging, sale, repair, removal all add up to our vaunted GNP. To date, this tragedy of waste bothered only tidy efficient souls who felt that such waste was sinful in a society where too many lived in want. But now, with mounting ecologic worries, the wasting of resources becomes a central societal concern.

To counter the threat of exhausting our resources, it is currently proposed that we "freeze" the total economy by setting a goal of Zero Economic Growth. Assuming that this becomes national policy—in whole or in part—there are three consequent questions:

(1) Unless population as well as the economy is frozen, the number of unemployed will mount every year. Who will carry them? If they are carried by "middle" America, tensions are bound to rise—for in a fixed economy, this means a reduction in the living standards of the middle. If the top 2 percent or 5 percent of the nation is to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

carry the burden of constantly rising unemployment, then income redistribution must take place.

(2) A corollary of the "unemployed" problem is that of people who are presently living in poverty and hunger or are at the brink of this sad state. At present, they live with some hope—the expectation that they (or their children) will have more tomorrow than today. How can their expectations be kept alive in a frozen economy except by income redistribution—not from the middle but from the top?

(3) Even with Zero Economic Growth, our economy will continue to waste—if it runs as it has in the past. The waste and pollution may not multiply exponentially because the machine will not be driven at ever higher speeds. But we will still continue to eat up and poison valuable and limited resources—without replacement.

Fortunately, the choices are not between growth and nongrowth. A third choice is to reconstitute the nature (the makeup) of the GNP in such a way that America can simultaneously increase its GNP, improve the quality of its output, maintain full employment, and do so while conserving and even restoring resources.

This becomes possible if national policies are established to: (1) restore; (2) recycle; (3) reorder product and service priorities. To *restore* polluted and poisoned lands and waters could (should) become a major American effort, employing millions of men; such labor does not devour resources, but reclaims lost resources. To *recycle* used materials likewise conserves and restores rather than depletes; the process again calls for employment of manpower and adds to the GNP. To *reorder* production and services to minimize or eliminate useless commodities, planned obsolescence, destructive industrial techniques, loss of valuable by-products, etc.; this can mean more and better—for less personal and social cost.

In sum, it is not necessary to stop growth or add to unemployment in order to preserve and restore our resources. Indeed, quite the opposite: a master effort to clean up and recycle could become a prime service (good) in calculating the GNP. And, if keyed to elimination of waste, it could mean a higher (healthier) standard of living with less depletion of resources.

This sort of recomposition of the GNP does not come easily or naturally to private entrepreneurs. To invest millions to clean up Lake Erie or billions to decontaminate oceans is hardly a profitable undertaking for corporate management charged by bond and stockholders to provide a return on investments. Similarily, to develop and install processes to prevent pollution could be a costly proposition that a company would be loath to introduce unless its competitors had to do the same. To turn out socially and personally wholesome products with little market potential, instead of socially and personally useless commodities, with much market potential, runs counter to prudent corporate practice. In sum, to ask the individual entrepreneur to take the initiative (on his own and at his own expense) to restore, recycle, and reorder is to expect him (as an institutional entity) to act contrary to his nature.

The criterion will have to be public use rather than corporate profit.

Hence, future moves to recompose the GNP must begin with public initiative for three reasons: first, because it is not natural for private entrepreneurs to undertake efforts that are not profitable although socially necessary and desirable; second, because a master plan for an ecologically sound economy requires a national overview, and power beyond the scope of private corporations; third because among the many national policies implicit in a comprehensive design—such as a policy on air, water, waste, land use—must be included a national policy on income distribution. Without the last, we may well find a rise of social pollution (human decay and disorder) in a sanitized environment. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Erazim Kohák

Socialism & the Welfare State

The welfare state represents easily the most appealing program socialists have ever offered. Its success in alleviating both the specific costs and existential anxiety of industrialization, together with its proven compatibility with liberal democracy, make it an ideal basis for a coalition capable of appealing both to industrial workers and to the middle sector of the self-employed, small entrepreneurs and service employees with hopes of independence. A broadly conceived program of social security, covering employment security and medical services as well as old-age pensions, housing, transportation, and municipal services—though perhaps not under the name of "welfare," in deference to American sensibilities—is clearly the most effective program democratic socialists can present in the United States.

Yet it is well to remember that the welfare state is not uniquely socialist. Its earliest, purposeful practitioner was, after all, Chancellor Bismarck. At his behest, welfare-state legislation was passed, together with a law banning the Social Democratic party—and for the specific purpose of taking the wind out of social democratic sails. Bismarck, hardly an appealing man but a consummate politician, saw the welfare state not as socialist but as a safe alternative to socialism.

A hundred years later, it is difficult to avoid the recognition that the welfare state, in some form, is indeed a necessary concomitant of technological sophistication or, more precisely, a necessary condition for social stability in a technologically sophisticated society, quite independent of ideology. The increasing complexity of an economy inevitably reduces the demand for occasional, unskilled labor, which is, in less complex economies, the traditional last resort of the casualties of the economic process. At the same time, economic development brings about more technological displacement and so a greater number of such casualties. It requires relatively long-range individual economic commitment, thus increasing the personal impact of becoming an economic casualty: it is easier to cut down on consumption than on mortgage, insurance, or installment payments. Finally, the mobility of labor, which this complexity requires, undercuts the stable wide-family unit and so deprives the economic casualty of the opportunity to spread the impact of joblessness or trouble over a large number of individuals within the family.

As a result, technological complexity, while favoring large sections of a society, also increases the pool of instability and despair and so threatens the stability of the system—unless the system is willing and able to provide broadly based social insurance against such effects of insecurity. In this sense, regardless of the ideology of the system, the welfare state is the necessary safeguard of social stability in a complex economy with a high rate of economic casualties. The revolutionary instability of developing countries seems less a result of the growth of the industrial working class than of the increase of the pool of economic casualties, which com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bines with a failure of nascent capitalism to provide social assurance against the strain.

Ironically, it is the Soviets who have most clearly recognized the stabilizing effect of welfare-state measures and have systematically and effectively used them as a countermeasure to instability. Admittedly, much of the instability in the Soviet Union and its occupied territories is politically rather than economically induced, stemming from resistance to Soviet autocracy and to Great Russian imperialism. But the pattern is constant: an increase in the pool of discontent is compensated by extensive programs of social welfare. Antonín Liehm speaks of a new social contract: the masses give up a large proportion of their human, national, and civil rights in exchange for being taken care of. Though politically oppressed, they are given a guaranteed income, health and old-age care and recreation, while the demands on their labor are limited: the low productivity of the Soviet system is notorious. That system may be inefficient, but, in spite of glaring privilege and extensive potential discontent, it has proved remarkably stable.

There is no reason why the same strategy could not be used to assure the stability of economic as well as political privilège. Not only commissars but corporations, too, can understand the stabilizing effect of social welfare. The United States lags behind in that development—for generations, the economically privileged in the U.S. have bought off the discontented with the vision of equal opportunity, conceived less as the opportunity to profit by one's labor than as the hope of the "big break," in the manner of Horatio Alger. Whether it is the effect of the frontier or a reflection of emigrant mentality, Americans have tended to prefer privation with a hope of great fortune to security without it. But other capitalist countries, notably West Germany, have successfully used social-welfare programs as a stabilizing device, and in recent years even Richard Nixon has exhibited a pronounced tendency to resort to them, in highly Bismarckian forms.

ALL OF THIS does not mean that the welfare state is bad. Far from it; it is good, very good, and very necessary. But it does mean that, in itself, the welfare state, good, humane, and just as it may be, is basically a stabilizing rather than socializing factor. While socialists should support welfare-state programs as intrinsically good and compatible with socialism, welfare statism is not socialism.

Socialism means more: it also embodies the hope for basic structural change—specifically, for a radical democratization of the economic process. It is the hope of transforming the worker, not only from an exploited into a well-paid object of the economic process, but from object into subject: it is the hope of transforming him into a participant in the decisions as well as a sharer in the fruits of economic activity. Socialism entails a transformation of the very concept of ownership from an abstract claim to possession, justifying economic privilege, to an expression of lived relationship. There is a rigorous parallel between democracy in politics and in economics. Democracy in politics means not merely recognition of a ruler's obligations to his subjects, but a basic transition from a conception of the state as a ruler's possession to that of a state that belongs to its citizens. Analogously, democracy in economics—socialism—means not only recognition of the owners' obligation to their employees but transition from the conception of the economy as the owners' possession to an economy belonging to its producers.

Politically, this aspect of socialism is far more problematic. While welfare-state programs can elicit both the support of the industrial labor force and of the middle sector of the self-employed and small entrepreneurs, recent experience (in England and Chile) shows that only industrial workers are likely to support programs for transforming the nature of property relations. Socialists can muster majorities as long as they restrict their proposals to social-welfare programs, which appeal not only to industrial workers but to the service, distribution, and low-level managerial sectors as well. They can be democratic, but only at the cost of not being fully socialist. When they propose to transform the very basis of property relations, they inevitably lose majority support; the middle sector, which is allied with the industrial workers on welfare-state issues, will align itself with the owners in face of fully socialist proposals.

It has been the tragedy of socialism that this unalterable fact was used, not as an argument

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for rethinking the socialist program, but rather either for abandoning hope—or for "imposing socialism" by force. Yet the latter is a contradiction in terms; socialism is democracy in economics. Gun-point "socialism" in principle is not, cannot be, and can never become socialism: it is nothing more or less than the extension of dictatorship from politics into economics. Socialism, as democracy in economics, is impossible without popular support: it must be democratic—or it cannot be at all.

I do not think the proper response is force or despair. It is, rather, a radical rethinking of what the idea of socialism should mean in practice, and a reformulation of socialist programs so that they can win the support not only of industrial workers but of popular majorities—and that means first of all of the middle sector of worker-owners. This is not a matter of persuading the middle sector that, like industrial workers, they are victimized by capitalism (which they are) but rather that, unlike the owners, they would *not* be victimized more severely and ultimately destroyed by socialism—and that this contention, so far, has been proven false. Except for such tactical concessions as the N.E.P., socialist movements attempting to transform property relations have failed to distinguish between corporate "private" ownership and private ownership based on self-labor. They have invariably reduced the self-employed to the status of wage slaves, analogous to that of industrial workers—but with the precarious exception of Yugoslavia, they have done little, except on paper, to emancipate industrial workers from this status.

Nor do I think this has been an accident. Except in England and Scandinavia, basic socialist conceptions of producer ownership were forged in highly centralized states where democracy, if it existed at all, was conceived as electoral control over central organs of a centralized state rather than as local autonomy and self-determination. European socialism has reflected this experience. Devotees of the cult of "the young Marx" might come up with references to "producers' associations," but, like European democracy, "orthodox" European Marxism was, in this respect, Lassallean. Ideas of radical internal democratization and decentralization of ownership appear in the works of such revisionists as Bernstein or of such humanists as Masaryk, but not in the work of such "orthodox" Marxists as Engels, the young Kautsky, or Lenin. Even democratic socialists such as Kautsky—when he achieved his renegate status—have often shared the conception of socialist ownership as centralized state ownership. They differed from their nondemocratic opponents only in their pious hope that such centralized state ownership might, by some miracle, be achieved by democratic means and prove compatible with democracy.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS who take the idea of transformation of property relations seriously need to be selective about their models. The French model of democracy—electoral control over the head of a centralized state—might well be far less appropriate than the Swiss model of maximum decentralization. Similarly, the socialist model based on state ownership of means of production will prove counterproductive even if "the workers own the state." Direct worker ownership, based on self-labor, might provide a far more acceptable and effective model.

The application of that model to a complex economy would require a range of variations. The one-man shop represents direct worker ownership, while enterprises requiring more than one worker might well use a cooperative model (the moshav rather than the kibbutz in agriculture). Industries requiring a larger work force might require an elected works council, while in societywide services and basic industries the works council might well include representatives of consumers as well as of producers. But the principle remains constant: the normative model is not state ownership but producer ownership, and the task of industrial organization is to approximate the paradigm of worker-owner rather than the paradigm of state monopoly.

A restructuring of property relations based on the conception of producer ownership rather than of state monopoly meets a basic socialist criterion: tools are controlled by those who use them. Far more than the principle of state ownership, such a restructured society will recognize the claim of labor. But this will not only be a program for democratization of industrial mass production. It will also recognize the claim of labor in the middle sector, expressed in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perennial hope, "Some day I'll open my own shop. . . ." So defined, socialism not only as a program of social welfare but as a program for restructuring property relations, might well win the support of a majority.

Could such a program win majority support in the United States? It well might—though certainly not under the name of socialism. The tradition of self-labor ownership in America is strong, but so is the association of the word "socialism" with a system of monopolistic state enterprise. The term to describe such restructuring would have to be different—say, "economic democracy."

But precisely because of the tradition of self-labor, a program of economic democracy might find support. The oil crisis has made many Americans aware that corporate enterprise is not a kind or an extension of "private" enterprise in the sense of enterprise based on self-labor, but its negation. The crisis also has made the point that corporate "owners" cannot be the trusted guardians of the public weal, even if unions can wrest from them a living wage with fringe benefits. There is a great need for an alternative to corporate capitalism; while state capitalism is not an alternative, economic democracy might well be.

To be sure, this is at best a long-range prospect, but the alternative—centralization—is no prospect at all, either for democracy or for socialism. As democratic socialists in America, with equal emphasis on all three terms, we must, first of all, teach the idea of social responsibility through welfare-state programs, in coalition with liberal Democrats. But we need not give up the idea of socialism if we are willing to recognize that socialism in America cannot be an import, whether from Yugoslavia, Sweden, or the Soviet Union, but must grow from native traditions of democracy, cooperation, and self-labor.

Recent events, from Watergate to the oil fiasco, have made the voters more willing to explore new directions then they have been for several decades. Given the deep roots of American democracy, they are not and never will be receptive to what passes for socialism in the Soviet Union and its occupied territories. If the only "socialist" alternative available were that represented by the elitist totalitarian Left, the current receptivity would pass and Americans would rest content with capitalism meliorated by welfare-state measures. Yet, if there is an available democratic socialist alternative, sensitive to American traditions of grass-roots democracy and self-labor—proposing democratization rather than nationalization of the economy—that alternative could prove quite attractive against the backdrop of moral, political, and economic bankruptcy of corporate ownership and could prove effective in shaping the future of America. □

Joseph Clark

Dètente—Shadow or Substance?

Some rather hard-headed observers, not ordinarily given to the strategy of appeasement as a means of achieving peace, have been heard to argue recently that increasing contacts with the Soviet Union, especially expanded trade, will encourage the Soviets to assume more liberal attitudes in both external and internal affairs. As a goal, it is difficult to find fault with détente—or with the pursuit of greater and mutually advantageous economic relations with the Communist countries.

How can one possibly oppose détente in a nuclear era, especially with regard to the nuclear powers? I am not about to offer such opposition. Rather early in the period of nuclear confrontation between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., a case for agreement between the non-Communist and Communist powers was made most forcibly by an unlikely proponent of détente, General Douglas MacArthur. To a startled audience of Daughters of the American Revolution in Los Angeles, General MacArthur brought the word that war with the Communists was out. He argued that the new technology of warfare had rendered war obsolete. Military commanders could no longer attain tradi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional objectives through warfare, certainly not through nuclear war.

Unfortunately for some of the current discussion about détente, there is insufficient regard for history, even rather recent history. Thus the commercial accord signed in Moscow between the United States and the Soviet Union in July 1935 provided for tariff concessions on our part. There was increasing, but still modest, Soviet-American trade in subsequent years, and proponents of the argument that trade brings more liberal foreign policies can point to the "popular front" period as a possible result of greater trade contacts.

Within the Soviet Union, however, the 1930s became years of the harshest tyranny and mass murder. Trade increased and the Moscow trials flourished. Heresy was hunted whether it existed or not. Millions were transported to forced labor camps, and the "Rights" and the "Lefts" were killed by the tens of thousands.

It has been suggested that trade might enable the Russians to relax their emphasis on heavy and military industry and provide some consumer goods for their long deprived citizens. To the contrary, the 1930s saw a proportionate investment in heavy industry far greater than had ever been made before, yet the expanded East-West trade that followed brought no easing of the plight of the Soviet working people.

When Hitler launched his armies against the Soviet Union, there ensued a period of alliance against the common foe as never existed before, or after, between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Considering the recent alliance between Hitler and Stalin, the worldwide Communist movement's agitation and sabotage of the "imperialist war" as its contribution to that alliance (producing, in the U.S., the imaginative slogan, "The Yanks Are Not Coming"), and considering the depth of isolationist and America First sentiment in this country, it was remarkable how President Roosevelt succeeded in mobilizing material and military aid for the Soviet war effort even before Pearl Harbor. It is still exciting to read in Robert E. Sherwood's book, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* how on October 1, 1941,

> The first "confidential protocol" between the U.S.A., and U.S.S.R. and the U.K. was signed and sealed by Harriman, Beaverbrook, and Molotov. It contained over seventy main items and more than eighty items of medical supplies—from tanks, planes and destroyers down to army boots (of which the Russians asked for 400,000 pairs monthly) and shellac (300 tons monthly).

There followed an outpouring of military and civilian supplies—in such quantity, with such speed, and at such hazard—as had never before gone from one country to another. It went free, Lend-Lease. Payment would not have to begin until five years after the war and at no interest. Besides, everyone knew the most of it would never be paid for, and it wasn't. Yet, as the avalanche of aid to the Soviet Union mounted so did a grotesque series of episodes: at a time when Americans were fighting with their Russian allies, Soviet suspicions and continuing opposition to "bourgeois democracy" were such as to hamper American efforts to speed the flow of planes and other material from the U.S. to help the Soviet struggle for survival. Incredible? Sherwood describes how smoothly American pilots and planes set up in Britain for combined operations against the Nazis. But,

> The problem of getting aircraft to the Soviet Union was much harder to solve. After the winter interlude of counterattacks, the Russians now faced the spring and summer months of renewed German offensive and their most pressing need was for fighter aircraft rather than bombers. Since there were no pursuit planes at that time with sufficient range to fly the Atlantic at any point, grievous shipping problems were involved, although they could be reduced to a certain extent by assembling the planes in Africa and flying them into Russia by way of Iran. There was a far easier more obvious route by way of Alaska to Siberia. Hopkins discussed this with General Eisenhower on May 1 and practical and comparatively simple plans were drawn up in the War Department by which the planes would be flown directly from aircraft factories all over the United States to Soviet fields in Siberia within a few days; yet this was one of the proposals on which the always suspicious Russians proved obdurate and, although they agreed "in principle," it was a painfully long time before they would make the actual necessary arrangements for putting into operation the sensible delivery route by way of Fairbanks, Alaska.

THEORY HAS IT that trade contacts between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. will inevitably produce a mellowing effect on the Soviet regime. But put aside a mellowing of the system. Consider simply that during the period of the greatest contact and friendship, the Soviets themselves were

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the biggest obstacle to getting American supplies into Russia for the Soviet battles for survival.

Before pursuing the subsequent results of this trade and aid, it is important to put the quantity and quality of that trade and aid in perspective. There is a fairly widespread impression that Soviet industrialization was entirely a bootstrap Soviet process. Opportunely, a recent letter to the *New York Times* quoted a report by Averell Harriman to the State Department made right after World War II:

> Stalin paid tribute to the assistance rendered by the United States to Soviet industry before and during the war. Stalin said that about two-thirds of all the large industrial enterprises in the Soviet Union had been built with United States help or technical assistance.

Some personal testimony in this respect may be in order. During nearly three years in the Soviet Union, 1950–53, I had rather more opportunity than most resident correspondents to visit Soviet industrial plants. From the Stalin Auto Works in Moscow to the Molotov complex in Gorki, from the Stalingrad Tractor Works on the Volga to the big electrical manufacturing plants on the Dnieper, I saw an amazing amount of American machinery. I remember touring the Dnieper River Power station, originally built under the direction of an American engineer, Hugh L. Cooper, and largely destroyed by the retreating Russians and then by the occupying Germans, and then rebuilt after the liberation of the Ukraine from German invaders. Six of the nine giant generators were made in America. The director, who was conducting my tour, explained that three of them were Soviet-built because the Americans had placed restrictions on strategic exports to the Soviet Union. Ours are better, he said. Perhaps they were, but no one could miss the gigantic impact of American trade and aid on the Soviet Union. It was clear in the early 1950s that, quite apart from the American exports to the Soviet Union before the war, the Soviets had made strenuous efforts to take the Lend-Lease of the latter part of the war in the form of industrial machinery and industrial raw materials. America was aware of this effort even though it meant bending the law under which Lend-Lease operated.

After the war with Germany was won, there was a sudden termination of American Lend-Lease supplies. This occasioned strenuous protests from Stalin and other Soviet spokesmen. But at the end of May 1945, Harry Hopkins was in Moscow to explain again that this sudden termination was not American policy "and that it had been countermanded promptly within twenty-four hours." Hopkins also tried to explain to Stalin that "the basic Lend-Lease Act made it clear that materials could only be delivered which would be useful in the process of the war." Hopkins added that the U.S. government "had interpreted this in its broadest sense" and had included, in addition to munitions of war, considerable nonmilitary items. Hopkins also went out of his way to stress American appreciation of the fact that "we never believed that our Lend-Lease help had been the chief factor in the Soviet defeat of Hitler on the Eastern front. That this had been done by the heroism and blood of the Russian Army."

But how much mellowing did all this trade and aid and understanding occasion after World War II? The following was poured into the minds of Soviet children by way of *Pionerskaya Pravda* in an issue of August 12, 1947:

> The United States of America is the richest capitalist country. It profited particularly at the time of the two world wars; 1914–18 and 1939–45. These wars laid waste almost all the countries of the world, carried off millions of human beings, resulted in enormous destruction. But they did not touch America. To the United States fell the remunerative role of supplier of weapons and other goods to the belligerent armies. Production in the U.S.A. ex-

dissent

HAVE YOU MOVED?

•

Send both old and new address to
DISSENT: 509 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

•

Allow three weeks
for change to become effective.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

panded, the profits of the capitalists doubled, many countries incurred debts of hundreds of millions of dollars to America.

LEAPING FROM THE HISTORY PAGES of trade and aid in the 1930s, to the World War II alliance, over the coldest years of the Cold War, and to the thawing of Soviet-American relations, along with the U.S.-Chinese reconciliation of the 1970s, we confront the issue of détente. I for one consider it a goal of inestimable importance to a troubled world in the nuclear age. But surely the great grain deal of 1972 is a lesson that Americans cannot forget—trade and aid don't necessarily result in mutual gain. For the Soviet regime that was certainly a good deal. For Continental Grain it was most profitable. For the American consumer it was a blow and deprivation. *For dissidents in the Soviet Union it brought no surcease, but continuing persecution.*

The problem today is not that we have détente and must like it or leave it. The problem is, rather, that gentlemen cry détente when there is very little of it. There were important negotiations for limitation of nuclear armaments (not reduction, unfortunately) in the SALT talks. There were increased cultural and commercial contacts. Then there was the Moscow agreement of May 29, 1972, signed by Nixon and Brezhnev, which declared that "The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. attach major importance to preventing the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations. Therefore, they will do their utmost to avoid military confrontations." They also said, "Both sides recognize that efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with these objectives." On the heels of this agreement came the intensified Soviet military supply project that facilitated the Egyptian-Syrian aggression of October 6, 1973. In the light of this recent history, Theodore Draper is on target when he refers to the Nixon-Brezhnev declaration as "one of the most delusory documents in American diplomatic history. . . ."

Détente is devoutly to be desired. But it surely is not a maneuver under whose guise the Soviets can stimulate the bloodiest Middle East War. There must be mutual advantage to trade and aid, to cultural exchange, and to all the increasing contacts that should take place between nations truly at peace. It will become an ugly word indeed if we continue to call the shadow that exists today détente, instead of the substance that must mean true agreement, true collaboration in and for peace and, above all, mutual trust based on such substance.

It seems to me that a proper and effective attitude on détente has been demonstrated by Dr. Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Handler had been assiduous in helping to develop scientific contacts and exchange between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. When word came that the great Soviet physicist and humanitarian Andrei Sakharov was being harassed and threatened by Soviet authorities, Dr. Handler cabled the protest of the U.S. Academy to its Soviet counterpart. Dr. Handler declared:

> Were Sakharov to be deprived of his opportunity to serve the Soviet people and humanity, it would be extremely difficult to imagine successful fulfillment of American pledges of binational scientific cooperation, the implementation of which is entirely dependent upon the voluntary effort and good will of our individual scientists and scientific institutions.

Two dissident Russian Jewish intellectuals who came to this country a year ago have expressed a realistic and constructive viewpoint on détente. They urged the U.S. to seek real arms control, truly mutual, a balanced reduction of forces, and a much freer exchange of people and ideas so that détente involves the people as well as the governments. And in their interview in the *New Yorker* they also said, "Bills like the Jackson Amendment, linking trade concessions to the Soviets with freedom to emigrate, are quite useful, because their goal is not to change Soviet society, which would be unrealistic, but to force the Soviets to follow their international obligations. . . ."

The record shows that trade, in and of itself, won't produce a liberalization of the Soviet regime or of its foreign relations. The long, sad history of Soviet relations with foreign countries shows that a constant vigilance, together with flexibility, is necessary on our part; firmness, together with readiness for mutual compromise; pressure, together with indications of good will—all these are required to make the relationship of some value to us and to the rest of the world. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Henry Pachter

Gramsci—Stalinist Without Dogma

SELECTIONS FROM THE PRISON NOTEBOOKS OF ANTONIO GRAMSCI, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers. 482 pp. Paper, $4.52.

When Antonio Gramsci's *Letters from Prison* were first published, ten years after his early death, Benedetto Croce—his old teacher and adversary who survived him—hailed the martyred leader of Italy's Communist party as "one of the great literati of our country." Twenty years later, the provincial government (not leftist but Christian Democratic) of his native Sardinia called a "Gramsci Congress," which brought together philosophers, historians, and critics from many countries. Today there is hardly a major city in Italy without a Via Gramsci. In Rome, an Istituto Gramsci piously guards Gramsci's papers pertaining to the turbulent history of the CPI, as well as the 2848 densely covered pages of his *"Quaderni"* (notebooks), reflecting his wide reading in history and the anxieties of the prisoner whose aspiration for a place in history were, for a time, frustrated. The present English edition is based on the original Italian six-volume selection, which was edited by Felice Platone and published in Torino by Einaudi, 1948–51.

The *Prison Notebooks* testify that Gramsci was not afraid to draw some conclusions at variance with the established school of "Marxism-Leninism"; they were published at a time when, at the other end of the philosophical spectrum, a pope was revising some truths the Church had taken to be established. To be sure, John XXIII did not repudiate the immaculate conception nor Gramsci the need for a Party dictatorship. But the expectation of further "convergence" tempted commentators to greet Gramsci's numerous deviations from Stalinist rigidity as so many harbingers of a universal Spring of Heresy.

The Communist movement has taken advantage of this reputation and cultivates the myth. In this new English one-volume edition of the *Notebooks,* the Gramsci Institute makes a show of even-handedness: the exhaustive introduction gives due credit to Trotsky and Radek for their contributions to the Communist International; the importance of Amadeo Bordiga, the ultra-Left founder of the Italian CP, and of Ignazio Silone is acknowledged critically but honestly; Gramsci's doubts about Marxist-Leninist dogma are not hidden but, where possible, pointed out.

The Introduction to the volume is excellent, and the numerous footnotes, generally, are very necessary for readers who are unfamiliar with Italian history and philosophy. Readers who skip footnotes and tire of turgid disquisitions can get a more concise, though essentially complete view of Gramsci in Louis Marx's edition, *The New Prince and Other Writings* (same publisher, 1957; 192 pp., paper, $2.25). There is also a collection of Gramsci's *Letters from Prison,* and a biography by G. Fiori. Coming back to the present one-volume Hoare-Smith edition, I must take issue with one major editorial decision. Gramsci had been under the influence of Benedetto Croce, the ex-Marxist, neo-Hegelian liberal philosopher, and his views on Machiavelli and historical subjects still show this indebtedness. In numerous passages one gets a glimpse of their differences; but a coherent sequence dealing with Croce (about 200

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pages), which is part of the original Italian six-volume selection, has been totally omitted. This is regrettable because Gramsci has often said that modern Marxists should relate to contemporary philosophers as Marx did to Hegel and Ricardo—i.e., develop their own ideas in the form of an immanent critique of their predecessors.

The Hoare-Smith selections deal with history, education, and philosophy, but their centerpiece is political power and organization. Much of the work is repetitious. Many of the ideas are tentative, contradictory and inchoate, few are original. Although they may seem original to young researchers who have never seen them in a Marxist author's handwriting, they are very much in the tradition of Italian political thought, from Machiavelli to Mazzini and Gentile.

Gramsci's writing is neither elegant nor deep, neither enlighteningly precise nor gripping in human substance. These are indeed *Notebooks,* and just that—jottings of an intelligent reader who takes an interest in the philosophical discussions of his age, and who has the leisure, in his forced isolation, to think about the condition of his country, his party, and the cause to which he has dedicated his life. I do not of course hold this against Gramsci; in prison one is apt to produce circular ideas rather than well-structured systems. I am merely observing that Antonio Gramsci was no Rosa Luxemburg and no Lenin, who both were able to work under similar conditions, nor a Machiavelli or Dante, whom exile forced to become great.

WITHIN THIS LIMITATION, Gramsci is interesting. He should be compared with Lukács and Korsch: their careers in the radical movement started similarly and then diverged in significant ways. All three came to Marxism after absorbing the vitalist and pragmatist philosophies prevailing at the universities around the turn of the century. Their early sympathies lay with Wobbly-type activism, and they were strongly influenced by such thinkers as Georges Sorel and Antonio Labriola, who injected a dose of "idealism" into Marxist theory and counted on the spontaneous creativity of the masses. Korsch was associated with the *Räte* movement in Germany, and later with the Spanish anarchists. Lukács's early Luxemburgism and idealism came under heavy criticism in the Comintern; he capitulated to become Moscow's cultural pope and in his later years was an epitome of Leninist sterility.

Gramsci was deeply involved with the factory council movement in Northern Italy—the *"commissione interne,"* which in 1920 occupied the factories. He published the weekly *Ordine Nuovo,* which made the slogan *"Democrazia Operaia"* (workers' democracy) popular, and propagated the goal of *"lo Stato Operaio"* much along the lines of Marx's "free association of producers," or of Tito's shop councils. This was the truly heroic phase of his life as a revolutionist; his writings in that period still have the earthy quality of populism. (Neither edition quotes enough material from *Lo Stato Operaio,* which was the earliest selection from Gramsci's writings.)

In January 1921, when this great movement had broken down, Gramsci helped found the Communist party. Later that year he went to Moscow and stayed for 18 months; he has never told anyone what his impressions were, nor has he written anything either favorable or unfavorable about the Soviet Union. He returned to Italy to "bolshevize" the CPI, fought the "leftist deviation" of Bordiga and the "rightist deviation" of Tasca (who believed in trade union action and proletarian culture), but above all denounced the Social Democrats and Liberals, and led the Communists out of the Aventinian alliance.[1] Gramsci thought that the CP could operate legally under fascism, and he treated the Socialists as the "major enemy." Like most Marxists then, he completely misjudged the character of the fascists state—a misconception Mussolini proceeded to correct.

There is a tragic parallel between the ultra-Left Marx after the lost revolution of 1848–49 and the bolshevization of the European intellectuals after the lost revolutions of 1919–21. Gramsci was least admirable in this period, when he was the Secretary of the CPI. But he was then a desperate man. Although he knew

[1] The Roman people, in the fifth century B.C., staged an exodus to Mount Aventinus to obtain rights from the Senate—the first political strike recorded in history. When the Center and Left parties were boycotting Mussolini's parliament, they remembered this and met on Mount Aventinus. Only the CP returned to the Capitolinus.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the revolution had been lost, he tried to perpetuate its posturing, embodied in the Communist party, and he clung to the notion that a new kind of organization could preserve the revolutionary forces—as though one could put them into a freezer to take out intact when a new period of revolutionary potentialities would arise.

Meanwhile, the task was twofold: to preserve these forces from reformist contamination, and to preserve the one bastion the revolution had gained in Russia. Therefore, although he knew that Trotsky was right in fearing the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state and the Bolshevist party, he nevertheless fought ruthlessly for the Stalin-Bukharin line—or, rather, for the Russia First line in the International and in the CPI. In this period Gramsci was neither undogmatic nor accommodating; his political personality was a living lie. Therefore, a Communst writer could recently say that Mussolini actually did Gramsci a favor when he forced him to think in solitude.

LIKE HEGEL'S OWL, Gramsci's thought spread its wings after dusk had fallen on the political landscape. In his ten years of prison life he gained insight into the workings of history. What is amazing in Gramsci's review of his political experience is that he does not look for tactical mistakes or accidents of history, but subjects his entire conception of politics to a thorough revision. However, he does not follow the earlier revisionists who simply gave up the revolutionary outlook, but goes back deeply into Italian history and tradition.

Gramsci asks these questions: Why does Italy not produce the kind of revolution that shook Germany during the Reformation, or France in 1789, or Russia in 1917? Why did the rising medieval cities not achieve the breakthrough toward modern capitalism? Why was the Renaissance the work of princes and not of the middle class? How could radicalism be shunted aside in the Risorgimento? Why has neither of the two Italian revolutions produced a Jacobin party? And what are the conditions for the rise of a revolutionary elite?

He never answers these questions. But in searching for answers he is led to ask other questions. What is the relationship between society and the dominant class, and between both and the leading elite? How can one class achieve "hegemony" over the others in a national revolution, and how does the revolutionary elite (whom he also calls the intellectuals) achieve "hegemony" over the revolutionary classes? Absorbing (that's his word) ideas of Pareto, Michels, and Mosca, he studies the revolutionizing effects of modern bureaucracies and other leadership cadres, which leads him to these frightening thoughts: Perhaps a revolution can be achieved through the action of the elite without any need for the revolutionary class to intervene? Did not the Prussian bureaucrats introduce the same reforms the Revolution introduced in France? Is it possible that fascism relates to the Russian Revolution as the Prussian bureaucrats did to the Jacobins?

Gramsci calls such a revolution from above "passive" or "restoration/revolution." This notion also leads him to some astute observations on the Russian Thermidor: After the Kronstadt uprising of 1921, the period of revolution has come to a close; the further development of the revolution no longer depends on the activities of the revolutionary class but on the performance of the bureaucrats, or "funzionarii," the "organic intelligentsia." It had been observed often before that the counterrevolution fulfills the work of the revolution. And, later, Lichtheim quoted an unidentified "Comintern theorist" as describing "fascism as the bourgeois revolution in the age of bourgeois counterrevolution."

Now Gramsci came to an uncanny, perverse understanding of what was happening in the Soviet Union: Trotsky's position had to be condemned not because he was wrong but because he was right! The "war of movement" (Gramsci's euphemism for the world revolution) had been replaced by the "war of position," which now

> demands immense sacrifices from the masses. An unprecedented hegemony [his word for dictatorship] is necessary. A more interventionist government must take the offensive against oppositionists . . . with controls everywhere reinforcing the hegemonial position of the dominant group.

Having accepted Stalin's definition of "socialism in one country," Gramsci understood the Russian Revolution as a national revolu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion; he expected the Italian revolution to be a continuation of national aspirations that had been at work ever since the time of the Risorgimento or even the Renaissance. He was deeply convinced, with Marx, that the Communists "do not try to realize any ideals" but must lead each nation toward the fulfillment of its destiny—molding that destiny in the process, to be sure, but not changing it. To try to change it is the mistake of "voluntarism," while the opposite mistake, leaving that fate to be shaped by so-called objective conditions, is called "economism." To find the right middle course between these two extremes, the Party must have a better understanding of its role than Marx, or even Lenin, had bestowed on their heirs. The mechanism of "hegemony," therefore, is studied in a sequence of aphorisms, entitled "The New Prince," with a not too subtle allusion to Machiavelli and written in his vein as commentaries to paradigmatic events. But Gramsci, I am sorry to say, does not get very far beyond Machiavelli; he is still in suspense between *Fortuna* and *Virtù*, between the conditions ripening in civil society (Hegel's *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) and the possibility of action by the leading party; between that party's need to possess moral authority (for which the code word is "hegemony") and the necessity, alas, of using coercion.

Following Croce and other Italian philosophers, Gramsci calls these speculations "philosophy of practice," which he equates with Marxism. He was as averse to metaphysics as to sociology. (The editors of *The Prison Notebook* suggest that fear of the censor imposed the "Aesopian" term. If that is the case, there would be no excuse for seeking a deep, esoteric meaning behind the much-abused notion of "praxis," which is so dear to the New Left philosophers.)

Gramsci apparently never read *Das Kapital* and his background in economics is weak; his Marxism was the kind of pragmatism, actionism, or vitalism that Mussolini and Gentile, too, were cultivating. Ideas were not either true or false but usable or unusable—or they could simply be flags: commenting on the factional fight in Moscow, Gramsci wrote that what mattered was not whose position was correct but who belonged to the faction holding a particular view. (This also was Stalin's opinion, and it was not only relevant but also rather confusing. For instance, Bordiga and Gramsci accused each other of lacking zeal in supporting "democratic centralism" when they really meant something very different.) Gramsci quotes Vico's *"verum ipsum factum"* (true is what I did myself) and a proverb that was dear to Mussolini, too: Act first, then think. A dangerous maxim, which "in practice" opens the door to any kind of opportunism. Of course, I mean to suggest, not that Gramsci was a fascist, but that he was drawing on contemporary philosophies that also were available to others. But what Gramsci feared most was "passive" submission to the "given": better make a mistake than do nothing. "Positive" science and sociology condemned the proletariat to fight on its enemies' premises, which led to reformism.

Gramsci therefore rejected theories that claim objective validity, especially those based on material conditions. Did not the Social Democrats base their critique of bolshevism on the dogma that Russia was not ready for socialism? Was not Kautsky's complacent determinism to blame for the labor movement's collapse in 1914 and for the failure of the European revolutions after World War I? No doctrine could be more pernicious to good politics than the belief in scientific predictions. Sociology was an ideology of the ruling class—politics an art!

Gramsci directed his most abrasive criticism against materialists and positivists, especially when they pretended to be Marxists. He ridiculed Plekhanov and Bukharin, who spent time and effort to prove that the universe was made of matter, that man was governed by inexorable, deterministic laws, and that Marxism was a science. His criticism of Bukharin's *Historical Materialism* (long the Comintern's catechism) is devastating though unfair.[2]

[2] Gramsci's unfairness shows in infractions of elementary logic. One of many examples: Bukharin is taken to task for adopting the natural sciences' definition of prediction as the test of truth. How can I predict, asks Gramsci, if my prediction changes the premises? This is nonsense. My prediction refers to the conditions extant before any new element is added. If my prediction changes these conditions, then I must predict how my prediction will affect the outcome. Gramsci's logic is never very tight; his philosophy is journalistic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gramsci's attack followed the line of Benedetto Croce, whose sophism had been exploded a hundred years earlier by Kant. "How is history a priori possible?" Kant asked, and answered, "If the prophet contrives that which he predicts."

HAD GRAMSCI LIVED LONGER, or had he been able to read German, he might have called his philosophy existentialist. Such formulations as "Man makes himself," which Sartre later was to popularize, came easily to Gramsci from other sources, as they did come to Lukács even before Marx's "early manuscripts" became available. He probably had learned from Croce and Lukács that Marxism should be considered not as a system but as a critique and a method—a method that, following Max Weber, he also applied to specific historical doctrines of Marx.

Such an extreme relativism can be justified only if some criterion is found to determine who shall be the agent of history (the historical subject, in Lukács's language). The proletariat as such certainly is not that agent, since it is part of that civil society that lacks consciousness and since its interests are not universal. The demiurge can only be the conscious strata of the proletariat, or the "intellectuals" representing it who constitute the political society and whose interests are general. Gramsci calls this agent of history "the organic intelligentsia"; he distinguishes it sharply from the "traditional intellectuals" (whom we can easily identify with Mannheim's "free-floating intellectuals").

To explain Gramsci's aversion to "traditional intellectuals," we must think of what he regards as windbags like Settembrini, or his model Mazzini who failed to understand what the people wanted in the Risorgimento; or perhaps we must go even farther back, to the Renaissance humanists who failed to see the national goal and continued to pursue the cosmopolitan ideals of medieval towns. (The medieval town and its culture were "internationalist"; hence Renaissance humanists were "reactionary." This interpretation goes back to Croce, too.) The "New Prince" rejects the traditional, cosmopolitan humanists whose concern is with ideas, and he resolutely supports the "organic intellectuals" who do not even have to be intellectuals but are technocrats, bureaucrats, political leaders, and above all activists close to the national temper. Their "hegemony" helps the classes of the civil society to transcend their particular interests; it leads them into the political society, which is of course Rousseau's "general will," or Lukács's "total aspect." Gramsci was not afraid to call his Jacobin party or political society "totalitarian." *Intellectualità totalitaria* may refer both to the personnel and to the required attitude or conception of its function. Both Lukács and Gramsci use "totalitarian" in this honorific sense.

This, however, is not the whole story. Political society, or Jacobin democracy, is the highest form of consciousness the new class can reach both up to and during the revolution. Thereafter, however, civil society expands its functions at the expense of political society, and "the state withers away." Here Gramsci's submerged syndicalism is allowed to surface for a furtive moment. In some passages he even seems to hope that the creative forces of civil society will continue to grow under fascism (and under Stalinism) and eventually submerge the rigid crust of political society. His actionist philosophy could tolerate murky definitions more easily than quietism. It is strange that Gramsci, who condemned positivism and materialism precisely because they encourage reformist illusions, here should indulge in a truly Hegelian synthesis: All paths lead to the fulfillment of History's ultimate command. It is never quite clear whether he looked toward a Jacobin state or expected the dialectics to continue; his code word for socialism is not "free society" but "regulated society."

In an obscure passage, Gramsci refers to the Trotskyite opposition as "black parliamentarianism" representing particular interests in a totalitarian state. Such moments, however, are rare in the selections we are given and totally absent in the published fragments. There Gramsci deals with subjects of greatest interest to the "hegemonial" element: the leaders' education, the state's duty to punish criminals, rational production methods, bureaucracy. He is concerned that professionalism could take over from the political directors, and he recommends a rigid classical education for the political elite (no "progressive," still less a "per-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

missive" educator, he distrusted Dalton and "educational libertarians"). Gramsci was an admiring student of Taylorism and "Fordism"; he never spoke of alienation, but he railed against "libertinism" and agreed with Ford that "the new type of man demanded by the rationalization of production and work cannot be developed until the sexual instinct has been suitably regulated and until it too has been rationalized." While he condemns Trotsky's proposal to militarize labor, he adds: "The principle of coercion . . . in the ordering of production or work is correct; but the form it assumed was mistaken."

It must be clear by now why Gramsci had to support Stalin against the "cosmopolitan intelligentsia." *He had a better understanding of Stalin's historical role than Stalin himself.* He even understood Mussolini, and under the strange conditions in which he wrote he often confused the two: whether to conceal from his jailers his thoughts about fascism or to conceal his thoughts about Stalin, he was able to tell the truth about the one by citing the other. If this was perverse, the ultimate transvaluation of a personal and political tragedy appeared in the shape that these glimpses into the web of history finally took: condemned to inaction, the prisoner projects a philosophy of action that seems to make history so transparent that the futility of action becomes manifest.

From Croce, Gramsci took the notion of the cathartic moment when theory and practice converge: the moment of revolution. This leaves us baffled as to the relationship of theory and practice at all other times. His philosophy here gets avowedly idealistic: the hope for that moment is kept alive in the spirit while Stalin's and Mussolini's mills are grinding away. With less philosophical precision than Hegel (or Lukács, for that matter), Gramsci's dialectics nevertheless aimed at a similar reconciliation. The ultimate truth is the convergence of Stalin and Mussolini, Marx and Christ, revolution and religion. All differences are submerged in a total relativism and, paradoxically, the philosophy of praxis has no handle to deal with reality. It is a philosophy born of defeat, more paralyzing than the positivism it proposed to overcome.

In this protean formlessness Gramsci's neo-Hegelian, post-Marxian, and pre-existentialist philosophy became the suitable ideology for all—alienated intellectuals who look for a theory of action, left-wing Christian Democrats looking for an unorthodox Marxist with whom to hold a dialogue, and Communist opportunists looking for a certified martyr to legitimize their application for cabinet posts. □

Joseph Buttinger

Ho & the Americans

HO CHI MINH: A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION, by Charles Fenn. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 144 pp. $6.95.

Concerning the story of Ho Chi Minh's life, the publishers of this new biography claim that "until now there has been very little biographical material available in this country." This is quite incorrect. Of the several hundred books that have appeared in English on Vietnam during the last 20 years, I could list no less than two dozen dealing either exclusively or primarily with the personality, life, thoughts and writings, the role as political leader of this extraordinary man.

With few exceptions—one in German and three in French—all these books are available in English to any American truly concerned with the subject. Two of these books—David Halberstam's *Ho* and Jean Sainteny's *Ho Chi Minh and His Vietnam*—were published as recently as 1971 and 1972, and Jean Lacouture's *Ho Chi Minh, A Political Biography*—regarded by some authorities as definitive—in 1968, a fact of which our author is well aware; most of his more than 250 footnotes deal with quotations from 16 books on Ho Chi

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Minh published prior to his own. Lacouture, for instance, is quoted by Fenn no less than 20 times, and there are 31 references to the collection of reminiscences by Ho's collaborators entitled *Days with Ho Chi Minh* (Hanoi, 1965), and Fenn mentions eight of its authors, among them Vo Nguyen Giap, by name. Other authors on Ho Chi Minh, to list only a few quoted by Fenn, are Robert Shaplen, Bernard B. Fall, Wilfred Burchett, Hoang Van Chi, Truong Chin, P. J. Honey—a comprehensive list comprising friends and admirers as well as enemies and critics. From another book, only in part dealing with Ho Chi Minh, Marvin E. Gettleman's *Vietnam: History, Documents and Opinions* (New York, 1965), Fenn quotes 19 references to Ho's life and work. Ho himself, apart from several letters addressed to the author, is quoted only nine times.

These letters to the author, written during a crucial phase of Ho's strategy to gain power after World War II and during the events with which they are dealing, justify a claim made by the publishers in their news release announcing the appearance of Fenn's book. It reads: *"New Biography of Ho Chi Minh reveals for the first time the whole story of his involvement with U.S. intelligence during WWII."* This is indeed what makes the book, apart from its several special virtues, essential reading for anyone interested in Vietnamese history and the role played in it by the 20th century's most prominent Vietnamese. Here we have a story, well-documented and convincing in every detail, which makes largely obsolete most of what has so far been written about Ho's relation to the Americans in Southern China during the months from February through August 1945, or, to use Fenn's own words: "Previous accounts of this particular period in Ho's life, largely coming from OSS sources, have been garbled" (p. 83).

As an agent of the OSS, for which he had been working in China since 1943, Fenn was charged in 1944 to work with a group operating inside Indochina with Free-French civilian intelligence agents whose work, however, came to an end after the Japanese coup against the French administration on March 9, 1945. In looking for contacts to rebuild a net of informants inside Indochina, not only the OSS but AGS (Air Ground Aid Service) as well—another U.S. agency, concerned with the rescue of pilots downed by the Japanese in Indochina and with liaison to prisoners of war and collection of intelligence—charged Fenn with establishing contacts with Vietnamese exiles in Kunming.

The ten pages of chapter 8, entitled "Gambler," contain what is most original in the entire book, since they tell for the first time the true story of Ho's relations with the Americans in Southern China. As a typical example of what Fenn means by a "garbled" account of these relations, he quotes Robert Shaplen, undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable authors on contemporary Vietnamese history. Fenn puts it thus: "Robert Shaplen writes (*The Lost Revolution*, p. 33) that when Ho had tried to contact Chennault, the general 'was warned by his KMT [Kuomintang] friends to steer clear of him.' On one occasion he 'unwittingly had Ho introduced to him as an old Vietnamese guide. Nothing came of that.' As we shall see," Fenn continues, "something very definitely did" (fn. 6, p. 78). The story of how the meeting between Ho and Chennault was arranged by Fenn

REGICIDE AND REVOLUTION

Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI

MICHAEL WALZER

"An excellent essay on kingship and its destruction using as examples the execution of Charles I of England and Louis XVI of France. Focusing on the latter, Walzer analyzes the arguments concerning the legality and morality of Louis' trial and defends the National Convention in its action. . . . An excellent work. . . ."

—*Library Journal* $12.50

Cambridge University Press

32 East 57th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on March 29, 1945, and what resulted from the encounter is told in several lengthy extracts from the diary the author kept, quoted in pages 76–84, and also in letters Ho wrote to Fenn, one of which is reproduced in Ho's handwriting. Ho not only had a long and friendly talk with Chennault in the presence of Fenn and of one of Ho's companions residing in Kunming, but upon Ho's request the general even gave him his photograph, signed "Yours Sincerely, Clair L. Chennault."

It was arranged for Ho to fly, together with a Chinese radio operator and another OSS agent, over 300 miles of mountains and jungles to an airstrip at Ching-hsi; from there Ho went to his base at Bac Bo, inside Vietnam. Radio contact was established with Ching-hsi and with Fenn at Kunming. Through this radio contact Fenn learned of Ho's safe arrival at his cave base, and of Ho's arrangements for the border crossing of the two OSS agents, in the company of 20 "gardes" Ho had sent along for their safety.

Both the Chinese nationalists and the French kept warning the Americans, and especially Fenn, against working with Ho, pointing out that the Vietminh was Communist-dominated, but the reply to a report sent by Fenn to the U.S. General Headquarters was to continue the operation despite these warnings.

Before leaving Kunming, Ho had requested from Fenn six new Colt-45 automatic pistols in their original wrappings, which were supplied to Fenn by the OSS. These American pistols were handed over to six top leaders at a Vietminh-called conference of rival resistance groups, whose skepticism about Ho's claim of having obtained American support he furthermore overcame by producing Chennault's signed photograph.

Before leaving Kunming, it was arranged that Ho would send some of his men to be trained as radio operators, and only a few days after contact had been established between Ho's cave base and Kunming (via Ching-hsi), a plane load of supplies was dropped at Ho's headquarters, consisting of "radio sets, medicines, gadgets, weapons." OSS supplied Fenn with most of these, since they, not AGAS, "had the bulk of supplies" (p. 81). Fenn himself wanted to join Ho, whose position among the Vietnamese resistance groups had been enormously strengthened after receiving American supplies, but AGAS opposed this and sent, instead of Fenn, a young officer named Phelan, who in one of his reports called the Vietminh "merely patriots deserving full trust and support." Phelan, incidentally, was the American whom Ho, according to an often told story, asked about the opening words of the American Declaration of Independence, which he wanted to use in his own Declaration. Robert Shaplen reports having been told by Phelan that Ho "actually seemed to know more about it than I did." Phelan also called Ho "an awfully sweet guy" whose main quality he described as "his gentleness" (Shaplen, *The Lost Revolution*, p. 31).

Through this American cooperation with Ho Chi Minh a total of 17 downed airmen were eventually rescued, with some local help, by the Vietminh. According to Fenn's convincing description, this cooperation was, in spite of political reservations, infinitely broader and characterized by much closer personal relationships between Ho and his American supporters than all earlier descriptions of this crucial episode in Ho's life led one to believe. It was an arrangement beneficial to both sides. The fact that some judgments of Ho by involved Americans were politically naive does not diminish its character as a series of pragmatic political moves, which in no way threatened American interests. However, the main beneficiary of this cooperation was the leader of the Vietminh. Fenn thinks that the three months after the Japanese coup in March 1945

> were perhaps the most significant in Ho's career. At the beginning he had been a leader of a party that was but one amongst many; unrecognized by the Americans, opposed by the French, shunned by the Chinese; with no weapons and no equipment. He was also, at the time, cut off from his group by a formidable 600 miles and no chance of flying any part of it. By the end of June, he was . . . the unquestioned leader of an overwhelmingly strong revolutionary party. Small wonder that the French, the Chinese and the OSS were now anxious to utilize this contact [p. 82].

HOWEVER, FENN'S BOOK is of value beyond its final revelation of the true extent to which the Americans in Southern China cooperated with and strengthened the position of Ho Chi Minh. Making use of all available sources, Fenn succeeds in presenting, in the very brief space of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

144 pages, the story of Ho's life, from his childhood to his triumph as president. He fills in many a gap in earlier accounts, and he carefully avoids taking a rigid position on episodes about which reliable sources are missing, or on matters over which serious authors disagree. As he says of his often-quoted *Days with Ho Chi Minh*, on which he believes any biographer of Ho largely depends: "I have endeavored to restrict my quotations to useful and non-controversial material" (p. 17).

Jean Lacouture, in his biography of Ho, complains about "the paucity of information concerning Ho Chi Minh's private life"—a paucity which his own book has considerably reduced. Fenn, who leans heavily on Lacouture, is equally cautious in regard to any episode in Ho's life for which convincing evidence is lacking, as for instance the question whether Ho was ever married, as some authors believe, or what the precise circumstances were under which he was able to end his term as a prisoner in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, anyone who wants to know the essential facts of Ho's personal and political life—or, as the subtitle of the book too modestly puts it, read *a biographical introduction* to it—will find everything of significance about the personality of this man and the role he played on the Vietnamese national as well as on the international scene during the more than 50 years of his political activity, of which he spent 30 outside of Vietnam.

Lacouture's statement that "everything known about Ho's life prior to 1941 is fragmentary, controversial and approximate," is no longer true. Fenn tells us not only who Ho's father was, that his mother died when he was ten, that he had an older brother and an older sister—but also everything of importance about his education and his moving from the place of his birth to Hue, Phan Thiet, and Saigon, prior to his leaving Vietnam on a French freighter. Thus began the years of travel that took Ho to Marseille, to America, to England, and, after a lengthy stay in Paris and his conversion to Communism, to Moscow where he soon became an agent of the Third International, and then as such worked in China, Thailand, and Hong Kong. There Ho founded, in 1925, the so-called Thanh Nien (League of Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth), generally described as the organizational and political predecessor of the Vietnamese Communist party. It matters little that in some instances the exact date of his movement from one place to another cannot be accurately determined. We get from Fenn's book, in less than half the space of Lacouture's biography, what I wrote about the latter a few years ago: "a vivid picture of a man with many talents, above all the talent to lead people and to arbitrate their differences; of a man with many attractive qualities that rarely fail to charm even those of his visitors who know him capable of great ruthlessness in the pursuit of his aims."

What we are told by Fenn about Ho is furthermore supported by a clear exposition of the international political scene, in as much as it affected the thinking and actions of this most enduring leader of international Communism. I fully agree with the publishers who say in their press release about Fenn's book that as a world leader, Ho Chi Minh "ranked with Ghandi, Mao, and Tito," to which, however, I want to add that in several respects he was the equal, and in some even the superior, of such world-famous leaders as Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and de Gaulle. □

Katya Gilden

New Twists in an Old Wound

THE HIDDEN INJURIES OF CLASS, by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 257 pp. $6.95.

The Hidden Injuries of Class reveals the worker once again as victim of the system rather than beneficiary, but in terms that owe more to the Movement criteria of the late 1960s than to the continuing realities of the industrial world.

Probing beneath the lingering hardhat stereotype, the book is devoted in the main to extrapolation from interviews—conducted under a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ford Foundation grant—with residents of Boston's ethnic ghettos and their children in suburbia. From this the interviewees emerge as neither hairy apes nor ineffable little guys nor data printouts but as full-scale personalities in the grip of contrary drives. The writing is Sennett's and the emphasis is his, save for an all-too-brief afterword by Cobb who differs from Sennett in the lessons he draws from their researches.

Sennett constructs his theory of class injury on the premise that we in the United States have achieved a "post-scarcity" society. Assured of the necessities, the worker cannot be regarded as motivated solely by a "calculus of material well-being." It is his frustrated inner need for freedom, dignity, self-realization that today constitutes his deprivation. Though no longer oppressed by sheer physical degradation and fear of want, he is nevertheless still subjected within the class structure, more so than ever, but now by a species of mental manipulation: through his acceptance of endemic American value standards.

Sennett's focus is on the definition of those values and the psychic damage they wreak. Viewing the purpose of "the hidden scheme of values" as perpetuation of "the inequities of nineteenth-century capitalism—on new terrain," he finds the emotional burden it imposes particularly concentrated in the ethnic manual worker, whose dilemma, he suggests, may serve to illuminate a general condition. The common ground of worker and intellectual, inferentially then, lies in rejection of a value system that might be termed the Horatio Alger syndrome.

Sennett neglects however, as Cobb points out at the end, to take into full account the impact of the production system. This failure, I believe, is the key to why an analysis conceptually complex, closely reasoned, rich in allusion, offering many valuable insights, ultimately seems to float in a vacuum.

To paraphrase Joyce's Mr. Deasy, "What is an American's proudest boast? . . . 'I made it on my own!' "

From the beginning Sennett dismisses the potent notion that, with the dispersal of urban nationality groups into the mixed white suburbs, we can in time expect a mainstream of American workers to turn to issues posed for all in common by corporate hegemony. The aspiration of the new suburbanites, he reminds us, is not fixed in this direction. Blue-collar and white-collar, they are oriented toward escape from the anonymity of their work stations, and toward fulfillment of the American dream: the individual triumphant.

> "Mass" . . . refers to the kind of work where people do not feel they express enough that is unique in themselves to win others' respect as individuals; "elite" refers to people who have become so complex they must be treated as special cases. . . .

With this definition of class distinction, the only one in the book, Sennett pinpoints the signal quality needed for class transition.

> That ability is the badge of individual worth, that calculations of ability create the image of a few individuals standing out from the mass, that to be an individual by virtue of ability is to have the right to transcend one's class origins—these are the basic suppositions of a society that produces feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy in people like Rissarro. . . .

From among 150 interviews Sennett excerpts directly from some 25. Mechanic, bricklayer, foreman, janitor, salesman, bank clerk, all have gone beyond the problem of bringing home the bacon and into the problem of acquiring the creature comforts that have become the staples of our time. They work hard, they provide for their families, they try to give their children an education that will set them on the road to upward mobility. In short, they do all that is expected of them as citizens and this, according to Sennett, is their undoing.

In their pithy and often rueful recitals he reads a pervasive self-doubt, planted in them by the very system they strive to live by. Their satisfaction in having advanced out of the poverty and chaos of their background is undermined by shame at not having gone farther—and by the painful admission, "I didn't have it in me." Their pride in their independence is penetrated with fear of ever becoming a burden on others, with mistrust of interdependence, with a sense of impotence—and the gut cry, "Everybody's out for himself! Nobody cares anymore!" Their deference to the high-performance professional who has "earned the right" to dignity and freedom of choice, even when they regard his expertise as phony, indicates the technique by which they have been brought

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not only to acquiesce in their own denigration but to accept the blame for it.

In the "land of opportunity," they are "the failures." Thus the principles of democracy and the Enlightenment, designed to break class barriers, furnish, in Sennett's view, the perfect new instrument for class division. Just as "blood" served in the past to legitimatize the power of the aristocracy over other men's labor, so today we have "the badge of ability."

From their earliest schooldays, Sennett traces out a tangled composite in which people desiring to do right humanly are conditioned to their own human diminishment. In the early grades they experience the arbitrary judgment of an authority who sorts out the few who will "make something of themselves" from the many who are "nothing special." The selection immediately engenders a conflict of interest between those who instinctively identify with their peers and those who must divorce themselves from the rest in order to get ahead. Later the authority of the teacher is assumed by management. The conflict between "individuality and fraternity," between the need to prove one's worth and to identify with one's fellows persists. It can only be resolved by competition for promotion, at the cost of community, or by refusal to compete, with consequent self-despisal. Rather than acknowledge fellow feeling—i.e. "weakness"—the alienated worker, as Sennett interprets it, will downgrade his own capabilities.

(In a telling instance, a factory foreman disparages himself for not driving the line harder. He is inwardly reluctant, Sennett feels, to humiliate the assemblers. But what about the foreman's other worry: risk of a wildcat flareup?)

Cast as a nonentity, the worker hankers after a "respect" that ought to be his by birthright. Striving to keep up with an ever-rising standard of living, he is driven to defend the class structure he supports and to vent his frustrations—"After all, who am I to protest? What do I know?"—against anyone, black, longhair, egghead, who threatens it

The college graduate son, in the isolation of his office cubicle or his ranch house, looks back sometimes with nostalgia to the authenticity of Pop's job in the mill, the kinship of the tenement. For he too in his brave new world is a nonentity who must fight for the main chance or remain in the lower career echelons blaming himself for his inadequacies. In family relations, courtship, friendship, Sennett extends the behavior by which the worker winds up in an emotional *cul de sac.*

MANIFESTLY, the belief that "only the few more richly endowed have the right to rule" suits the ends of corporate domination. Under our class system, no basic challenge is raised by workers (or by their unions) to the economy.

Nor does this book raise such a challenge.

Offering a theory of how and why the worker is brainwashed, it attacks the method employed. "Ability"—the rod that divides the sheep from the goats in kindergarten becoming in time the rod of self-chastisement—is the villain of Sennett's piece. His solution? Elimination in our "post-scarcity" society of "the whole scheme of individuals recognized and respected by virtue of ability."

> The problem confronting an affluent capitalist society is not how to make more things, but how to get rid of what it has. The fact that the United States has arrived at a condition where so much more can be produced than what is needed means the country might also afford to stop the divisive process of evaluation without threatening survival. We can now afford a diversity, rather than a hierarchy of talents. . . .

And so, implicitly, the vision of the intellectual dissident of a few short years ago is joined with a rationale for working-class dissidence in the years just ahead.

THERE IS MUCH truth in Sennett's argument but it is a limited truth. As with Al Capp's Salomyburger, everything's in it but Salomy. The meat of the matter is missing.

That American workers are inwardly harassed is true enough but surely it is not just or mainly because they feel themselves to be failed Horatio Alger heroes. The shame, anxiety, anger, frustration, and fragmentation depicted here derive primarily from an external situation.

The men and women who create the wealth of the nation are regarded in our culture as a peripheral element. On the factory floor they are "hands," of less importance than the equipment because more easily replaceable. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

benefit of their labor accrues to persons unknown. Any pride they may take in their skill is preempted by company sleights of cost-cutting—in their own eyes, they are putting out garbage. Whatever their income or political leaning, they remain in the same position: they own neither the machinery they work nor the materials they work on nor the plant they work in. Whatever cushioning their unions have won for them, they have little real assurance of present or future security. All the lumps of the system are paid for out of their pocket. They even foot the bill for the unemployables of the system, a philanthropy once reserved for the conscience of the rich.

In the community they are equally unimportant, not to be compared with citizens of influence. In our country, with its presumption of class fluidity, they are without schooling in working-class history and tradition; without a widely recognized press or media voice. They do not have the political identification of a Labor party in which they can see themselves as kingpin.

Why don't they rebel?

A proposal to eliminate the ability standard (or the work ethic!) is no more germane to their immediate plight than those academic discussions that used to take place over "disposition of leisure under the new automation" at a time when actual work hours were zooming. In fact, the removal of merit ratings might leave the faceless worker on the factory floor feeling more faceless than ever. The prospect Sennett suggests of universal participation in the necessary drudgeries with everyone otherwise free to develop his own potential—desirable as it may be—could seem almost hallucinatory to the worker at a point when the squeeze is on him from all sides for more productivity. And the premise of a postscarcity, postindustrial United States that can "afford inefficiency," even if it were to hold up, makes no sense within the global overview of both underdeveloped and shrinking resources. The great need now and in the foreseeable future is for expansion of supply. Somehow a whole historic phase has been leapfrogged.

Jonathan Cobb's interpretation of their material touches upon the crux of the matter.

> The uses of ability, of development, of culture are political questions about which the ruling class in any age sets the standards. . . .
>
> The organization of lives in terms of social production for private profit forms the ground on which the factory, the office, the school system are organized. . . .
>
> The kids in the Watson School didn't feel betrayed only because others were getting approval, but because they felt the Freds and Vincents were using their power and that approval not towards aiding them, but towards escaping the situation and progressing by themselves. . . .
>
> When the structure of society appears as permanent or beyond human control . . . transformation becomes individualized. Circumstances, the structure of society, remain and you move and as a result you leave situations, classes, structures as they are.

It is hard to believe that in a work on the hidden injuries of class these least hidden sources of injury, which ought to have served as a point of departure, should go almost ignored up to the postcript. Perhaps Sennett was trying to avoid the obvious, but by avoidance he conceals. If he had been less intent on excluding a "materialist" frame of reference, if he had steeped himself in the detail and morphology of the job in which his subjects were daily engaged, if he had allowed for reshiftings of attitude made possible by the process of events, his diagnosis would have gained in dimension, direction, and persuasiveness. He would have been spared at least a suspicion now and then of hundred-dollar misunderstandings.

Labor books of drive and excitement are too rare to be caviled at. It would be too easy to say of this one that it started off on the wrong foot and flourished, brilliantly, on its own logic. More vital to ask why the wrong start in the first place.

The answer lies partly in the distinction between the worker's and intellectual's mode of operation. The worker deals mentally and physically with a reality outside himself; he is no Hegelian idealist. The intellectual deals with materials that reside in the mind, to the point sometimes where he can come to believe that reality exists only as the mind perceives and molds it. The fault lies also with the creative mode of the times. An excess of subjectivity, relying maximally on the perceptual-verbal gifts of the observer and only minimally on the substance observed, has spilled over from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

our literature into other areas of writing. But what makes good poetry does not necessarily make good social science. The instrumentation of the writer must be judged by its ability to approximate what it is trained upon.

Sennett's assumption of earnings forever sufficient unto the day, of picture-windowed plants whose only sin is their banality, reduces the worker's battle to one in his own—and the worker's—mind. To expect the worker to revise his idea of the good life as a means of changing the class scene, while scanting the nature and magnitude of the industrial presence, is like expecting the black family to readjust its home life as a means of changing the race scene. The law of look-out-for-number-one—in self, family, ethnicity—flows naturally from a class system based on monopoly control and money, not ability. A metamorphosis of values simply cannot by itself accomplish the revolutionary humanism urged here. □

Richard Robbins

A Writer's Progress

FROM THE DIARY OF A SNAIL, by Günter Grass. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 310 pp. $7.95.

In some sense, all writers and artists are politically engaged; they have to protect the integrity of their work from the heavy hand of the commissar and the censor. In defense of freedom of expression the nonpolitical painter and the political poet share an ethos. A smaller number, whose work itself takes shape from political events, often feel compelled to make a personal commitment. These men and women choose parties, frame policies, enroll in movements. They could not do otherwise, even if, as Auden kept saying in his later years, a life in literature carries no special warranty of wisdom for a life in politics. Orwell, Malraux, and Silone come to mind as contemporary examples. Günter Grass, one of West Germany's most celebrated novelists, belongs in such company. His novels, *The Tin Drum, Cat and Mouse, Local Anaesthetic,* are about the Nazi nightmare and the morning after in postwar Germany. His characters, at once grotesque and deeply human, wander across the German landscape, buffeted by war or made restless by postwar affluence, moved to and fro by "the state." And in the context of the more personal political commitment I am describing, Günter Grass has been, and is now, an activist in the Social Democratic party and a friend of the SDP's leader and ex-Chancellor of West Germany, Willy Brandt.

From the Diary of a Snail is about Grass's participation in the 1969 election campaign, his travels through West German towns and cities with friends in a little motor van, the hundred-odd speeches he gave for the SDP in pubs and political clubs. But not really. The campaign is only a device, an ignition key to start up reflection about Germany past and present and the human condition. (In fact Willy Brandt scarcely appears, though when he does it is telling, as when, in Warsawer, he went down on his knees "instead of dispensing words" on the massacred Jews. As for the issues, apart from a general commitment to humanistic socialism, we are offered only a scatter of footnotes identifying the opposition parties and personalities.) No, what the book is really about is personal-political: how a West German of sensibility, a writer, a family man with a wife and four children, can explain to us and to himself the dark history of the Nazi period and why the road back from despair is slow, leading to hope but not utopia. Progress . . . it's a snail's journey.

THE CAMPAIGN LEADS to the diary. The diary is in the form of stories for Grass's children; they will learn from them why Grass regards politics, for all the absurdities and the foolish speeches, as a central commitment. The stories, in turn, take us back to Danzig just before World War II, when that city was the centerpiece of the Polish Corridor, and the pressures began to mount against the persecuted Jews.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Another device: although the sad story of the destruction of the Jewish community is told in a straightforward descriptive way—and all the more moving for that—the fragments are pieced together by an imaginary character, a non-Jew, a teacher, a man of sensitivity whose hobby is snails and whose commitment is to do what he can for Jewish friends: Dr. Herman Ott (Doubt). Doubt has not only his snails but his Dürer print, *Melancholia I,* to sustain him when he is forced to spend the war in the cellar of a Polish peasant who alternately protects and beats him. In the midst of death, life: Doubt and the peasant's daughter awaken to sex. They survive the war, marry, have a child. Final device: Doubt lives long enough to learn the fate of the Jewish children who were slaughtered and the Jewish families who survived the precarious journey to Israel. And so back to Grass, a survivor himself, born in Danzig, now (wryly) a "famous author," but more concerned to make his children *see,* to remember the names and faces of those from Danzig and now in Israel, to prepare his forthcoming lecture on Dürer's *Melancholia I* in such a way as to show how "melancholy and utopia preclude one another," to "put in a good word for melancholy," to "respect stasis in progress."

Without being pretentious about it, the snail's progress matters a little. So does the SDP. So does Willy Brandt. So does the writer-citizen who gives some not-very-electrifying speeches in a handful of public places where speaker and audience are equally tired late at night.

Doubt, melancholy, progress. Snails, symbols, and politics. Stories and true stories. Does it all work? In one sense, yes. The shuttling back and forth in time, the vignettes of then in Danzig and now in Berlin—all this does remind us of how laden our recent history is with devastation, crisis, despair, followed by an erratic but still perceptible progress. Here are two samples of Grass's technique, one coda to the other:

> When his student gave up Roman snails, Doubt interrupted his speculations and made himself useful. He helped with preparations for sending children to England. In May, seventy-four, in July, first six, then sixteen children left the Free State. When, on August 23, 1939 (a week before the outbreak of the war), twenty-six more children set out for England, an article in the organ of the Jewish community concluded with the words: ". . . and when you are out in the world, remain true sons of Jewry, to whose sufferings you owe the privilege of going out into the world."
>
> Only a few of the more than a hundred children were to see their parents again. A few days ago, an English journalist who is doing a story for the *Observer* accompanied me on a campaign trip to Paderborn, Meschede, Schwelm, and Ennepethal. Back in the Volkswagen bus after visiting the Stocky & Schmitz factory, he intimated in subordinate clauses that he (like myself) had grown up in Danzig and (like myself) had been just twelve when the war broke out. This English journalist was your age, Franz and Raoul, when he left Danzig in one of those four groups of children. He couldn't remember a schoolteacher by the name of Ott (known as Doubt); but he could still see the city—gables, churches, streets, porches, and chimes, gulls on blocks of ice and over brackish water. . . . Are you listening?

THIS IS THE STYLE employed in *From the Diary of a Snail* to persuade us essentially of the importance of remembering. Grass's children will remember the snail stories and Dr. Ott in the cellar; they will also remember the Jews and Auschwitz. I think the book does work in this vein, and I was moved by it. I can imagine in the same way how parents in America will have to explain to their children Vietnam and the civil rights movement and Dr. Martin Luther King (known as Hope?).

All the same, Günter Grass disappoints in this book. And not simply because, stylistically, there are too many pages where confusion is created by symbols inside symbols and flashbacks inside flashbacks. Rather, it is because a reader longs finally for a full discussion of contemporary politics in Germany at some point *without* all the convolutions. And that is never provided. Why does a writer like Grass actively plunge into SDP party politics? What is his sense of the political and social conflicts in West Germany today? Are there Social Democratic programs in housing, economic planning, relations with East Germany, and what do they look like to a writer-citizen?

Günter Grass may well answer that this is another kind of book to be written by another kind of writer. Meanwhile his account of Danzig, Dr. Ott, and the Jewish community, as told to his four children, stays in the mind. We cannot be reminded often enough of those who escaped and those who were trapped. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

On Chile

Editor:

Stanley Plastrik's generally excellent article on the Chilean tragedy, in your Winter 1974 issue, characterized Unidad Popular's vote of 43 percent in the 1973 legislative elections as its peak. Actually, a year after the 1970 election of Allende, Unidad Popular obtained 49 percent in nationwide municipal elections. During that first year, the real wages of the majority of the population increased substantially, though partly as a result of methods that later contributed to the inflation. However, by 1973 all but the inhabitants of the *poblaciones* had suffered a substantial decline in living levels. Under these circumstances the 43 percent result showed that a much broader stratum of workers besides the slum dwellers was still voting for the Left coalition, no longer partly for short-term economic reasons, but strictly out of identification with the first regime that really represented them.

Stubborn as was the loyalty to the regime of this 43 percent of the voters, they obviously could not stand up against the army, backed by the middle-class organizations and the U.S. However, in explaining the factors contributing to the country's economic dislocation and thereby creating the basis for the military takeover, Plastrik omits one very important factor—the nationalization of the copper mining industry.

Over and above all the damage done to Chile by the financial machinations of the U.S., the fact remains that nationalization caused a severe drop in copper production, partly because of the departure of managers and engineers, partly because of lengthy strike struggles of the miners against the government. The enormous resulting loss of foreign exchange was the precipitating factor in Chile's economic crisis.

The major achievement of Allende's immediate predecessor, Frei, was the "Chileanization" of the copper industry, under which the state became 51 percent owner of the mines, with the companies being forced to adhere to a schedule of investment for expansion, under pain of expropriation otherwise. If this program had been continued by Allende, he could have, as the next step, secured legislation setting an actual date for nationalization some years hence, in the meantime requiring maintenance and expansion of production and steps in Chileanization of all levels of personnel.

This is precisely the program under which the Venezuelan oil industry is operating today, although the government is now considering an earlier date for reversion of oil properties to the government than the 1983 date in the present law.

The irony of this aspect of the Chilean tragedy lies in the fact that nationalization was voted *unanimously* by the National Assembly in which the Left coalition was a minority. Clearly the political appeal of expropriation of the great U.S. firms was overwhelming. Thus the only important action for which Allende could claim national consensus was the action whose ultimate consequences undid all the social accomplishments of his term.

And now, another ironic aspect of the situation. During the last year of the Allende regime copper prices rose substantially, as they are continuing to rise, like those of all other metals, on the world market. In addition there was a modest rise in Chile's copper production in 1973. The military dictatorship will now benefit from the first large-scale reversal of trade terms in favor of the developing countries in over 20 years. Countering this would be the increase in the cost of oil imports, but this is insignificant in Chile, the only substantial coal producer in Latin America. Workers and democrats in Chile will have to wage their struggle in the context of an economic situation favorable to their torturers.

SAUL MENDELSON □
Chicago

Amnesty

Editor:

"In Defense of Amnesty" [Winter 1974 issue], Mr. Damico opposes my views on at least three matters. I may be wrong on all three, but for independent reasons; wherefore I shall consider separately: (1) the duty of the government to punish lawbreakers; (2) the right of the government to grant amnesties; (3) the advisability of exercising that right in favor of resisters and deserters in the Vietnam conflict.

(1) Mr. Damico asks that I "show that the state is under some form of obligation to punish a violation of the law." I thought I had, but will again. The law threatens to punish violators, and the state has the obligation to enforce it. Hence the state must do what the law threatens—punish violations. Threats are (negative) promises and *pacta sunt servanda*—promises must be kept, if only to remain credible. If they are not, laws become options, and the government would have cheated those who did believe that legal threats were serious, who obeyed the law to their disadvantage, having been deceived into believing that they had no choice, that laws would be enforced. Thus, the obligation to always punish violators arises from the need to keep faith with nonviolators, and to keep the laws credible, from the sworn duty of government officials to do justice by enforcing the law. Meeting that obligation may also have the desirable effect of deterring other

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people from violations, but the obligation is independent of it.

(2) I discussed amnesty in an interview, transcribed in *When Can I Come Home?*, without sufficently demonstrating that one can consistently support, as I do, the duty to punish, the right to grant amnesty, and the non-exercise of that right. I apologize if my failure misled Damico into believing that I think amnesties should never be granted. Rights and obligations always are qualified by others; the obligation to punish is no exception. Governments have traditionally tempered justice with mercy (*justitia dulcore misericordiae temperata* is the phrase) by pardoning individuals or granting amnesties. Amnesty means forgoing (literally forgetting) justice in favor of charity, and I see nothing wrong with doing so—at times.

(3) Let me correct some further misapprehensions before explaining why I oppose granting the particular amnesty Mr. Damico advocates.

As I indicated in my *Political Violence & Civil Disobedience* (Harper Torchbooks, 1972), which Damico quotes, I do not think that the law should always be obeyed, let alone that "disobedience is an attack on democracy." I distinguish persuasive civil disobedience, an attempt to persuade society to change laws or policies by symbolic resistance and acceptance of penalities, from coercive civil disobedience, which tries to impose the views of the disobedient minority on the majority and thus implies the partial or total overthrow of democratic legitimacy. Neither can be legal; either can be morally justified under different but always stringent conditions. Coercive, unlike persuasive, civil disobedience is justifiable only in such extreme instances as justify the impairment or abolition of democracy. Those who fled did not engage in persuasion. Had they, I should favor pardons. But they either intended to impose their political views or to avoid a legal duty for personal reasons.

Mr. Damico chides me for "translating the political dispute over opposition to the Vietnam war into a judicial question of legal right and wrong." Whenever someone violates the law in the course of a "political dispute" his violation, not the dispute, becomes "a judicial question"—just as it does if a husband, in the course of a "marital dispute," violates the law. The dispute may be marital, but the adjudication of his violation becomes "a judicial question." If this means, as Mr. Damico protests, "that the law supporting the government's politics must automatically take precedence over the politics of the government's opponents," this is the nature of the animal. The politics of the opponents certainly cannot take precedence over the law; if there is to be law, violation of it must be punished.

The making of laws is, of course, a political process. But the application to those accused of violating laws is always a judicial process. Most of Mr. Damico's errors could have been avoided had he kept apart these areas. Thus, the exiles are not "punished simply for their political position" as he asserts, but for violating the law—whatever their motives which, I grant, were often political, more often mixed, or mixed up.

Other ideas leave me perplexed. Mr. Damico finds that "religious conscientious objectors" received differential treatment and he argues that, therefore, war resisters should. *Non sequitur.* The law permits conscientious objection (which need not be religious) but prohibits desertion and refusal to serve by those not recognized as objectors. Mr. Damico seems to say that since we do not punish those who take what is lawfully theirs, we should not punish those who take unlawfully what is not theirs. An odd way of saying there should be no law.

What Mr. Damico advocates deserves serious consideration, even if some of his argumuents do not. He suggests amnesty would heal the wounds of conflict, bring more unity and more respect for democratic institutions, and is the best way to help decent kids to return to the home they fled. These are worthwhile purposes. Would amnesty achieve them? I don't think so.

Amnesty sometimes reduces conflict (e.g., after a civil war), but here it would not. Those who did serve would bitterly resent the middle-class kids who got away with it—even if they are well-meaning kids. (Mr. Damico speaks of 75,000-125,000 exiles. No one knows the exact figure, but I think 10,000-20,000 is a generous estimate.)

The offenders were not, in the main, pacifists opposed to all wars. These were (and are usually) exempted. The offenders escaped or deserted because they oppose a war the country was fighting which they thought unjust—because they gave priority to their political judgment over the decisions of the government, the legitimate authority. I cannot see how granting them amnesty would increase respect for the democratic processes they exempted themselves from.

I favor leniency for those who want to return and plead guilty to what they were guilty of. They might be sentenced to undertake some public service in place of the military service they refused. Neither justice, nor politics, nor the defendants, require prison terms now. But amnesty would smack of retroactive justification of unadmitted law violations. It would be divisive and erosive of lawful democratic processes, not least because the arguments advanced for it justify the offenses for which amnesty is to be granted.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York

ALFONSO J. DAMICO *replies:*

It would be interesting but probably inconclusive to argue further with Mr. van den Haag about why we punish people. On this point, I will only say that his retributionist argument that punishment is necessary so as to restore a position of equality between the exiles and those "who obeyed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the law to their disadvantage" harshly pretends that draft resistance and desertion, like burglary and embezzlement, yield significant but illicit gain. Considering the distress and suffering of life in exile, there is something unreal about comparing the exiles' advantages with the disadvantages of the law-abiding or, more exactly, those who served in Vietnam. If punishment, including alternative service, is being defended to provide gratification for those who obeyed the law, the answer is that the exiles have already paid a price. It is time, in any case, to stop making entries in van den Haag's calculus of grievances and satisfactions.

Another minor point evidently needing clarification is my assertion that the exemption of religious conscientious objectors demonstrates the society has and can again treat men partially rather than impartially. I do not think that I blurred the obvious distinction between the existing legal recognition of some forms of conscientious objection and the proposed legal recognition of the exiles' objection to the Vietnam war. I only intended the example to meet the objections of those who argue that we cannot tolerate behavior that increases the burdens of others (e.g., the chances of military service) and to suggest that we are capable of dealing with particular cases without undermining the generality of the rule of law. I simply do not know how an argument for amnesty—a legal measure—can be construed as an "odd way" of rejecting all law.

No one, with the possible exception of the anarchist, would want to deny that once the rule of law is embraced as a good, there is a presumption in favor of punishing those who break the law. Punishment need not automatically follow, but the presumption must be overcome. In this connection, I wish Mr. van den Haag had chosen to say something about Locke's teaching that as more and more citizens become estranged from the government the presumption is no longer on the side of the state's officers. It is this refusal by the critics of amnesty to consider the political context within which the exiles' resistance occurred which keeps them from seeing that the case for amnesty does overturn the presumption in favor of punishment.

What van den Haag does instead is to focus upon the character or nature of the exiles. But even here I am still not sure that I understand what he means by "coercive" civil disobedience. He seems to mean the coercive imposition of a minority view upon the majority, involving finally the overthrow of democracy. I feel certain that this confuses revolution with civil disobedience—persuasive, coercive, or otherwise. It is a strange doctrine that has little to do with the exiles.

But if the exiles are not civil disobedients, what are they? Presuming that they are not just "mixed-up kids," the answer is that their acts are those of conscientious refusal, e.g., disobedience of a direct legal injunction addressed to the individual. Such refusal is, indeed, personal; but, unlike ordinary crime, it is political and public. Traditional theories of civil disobedience have made it difficult to defend such political offenses by biasing opinion against resistance that evades the legal punishment. The unfortunate legacy of Socrates' example is that it focuses our attention upon the "sincerity" of the disobedient's motives. By worrying about the conscientiousness of the exiles' behavior, van den Haag and others can avoid considering the substantive events that occasioned the resistance.

Nowhere does van den Haag acknowledge that the exiles were disobeying a severely compromised government. It is far from clear that they exempted themselves from "lawful democratic processes." At the very least, we must recognize that the sorry record of political lying and the barbaric prosecution of the Vietnam War are things that count in "adjudicating" the political dispute between the exiles and the government.

It is, finally, not necessary to agree with the exiles' politics. All that amnesty requires is that we admit that their convictions and doubts about the war were neither frivolous nor were they honored without paying a price. Amnesty would hardly justify lawlessness. What it might do is register a public belief that whenever possible—which is most of the time—the government should avoid pursuing policies in such a way that political differences become political wars. □

Anniversary Note

Editor:

Please consider this a mere footnote, that is to say, a chip off the old kitchen table esthetic of the original DISSENT design. Joseph Epstein's fine review of "The First Twenty Years" was seriously marred for me by his glib reference to the early days of DISSENT which, "from the standpoint of design was very far from eye-catching—fit more for the kitchen than for the coffee table." Shades of Chardin! The great "socialist" impressionist old Père Pissaro, not to mention Cézanne's table-top rising up in revolt at such a visual sell-out!

Why the original DISSENT cover design had a quality of the hand which, like it or not, was in every sense far more in keeping with the values and purpose of the magazine than the present tubular machine esthetic of the '30s, fit, I dare say, *only* for the coffee tables of those whose mechanized kitchens never achieved an independent identity! In the present period which is experiencing a great revival of "handicraft," I suggest that the present design of DISSENT is sadly reactionary compared to the level of the magazine's contents, which continues to be responsive to "current" events.

Happy birthday!

JOCELYN BRODIE
Keene, N. H.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On Oakeshott

Editor:

Hanna Pitkin's article in the Fall 1973 issue, entitled "Oakeshott and the Denial of Politics," was a most thoughtful and intelligent exposition of some of the ideas contained in the works of Michael Oakeshott. I think it is a good first attempt at injecting a different mode of thought into the debate concerning the character of conservatism.

As someone who had the pleasure of listening to Professor Oakeshott at the L.S.E., I was always amazed at the subtlety of his thought and the systematic quality of his insight. Professor Oakeshott has had a profound impact upon the development of political theory and especially the reassertion of the conservative point of view in Britain. Indeed, it is true to say that the "Oakeshottian School" of political thought has emerged in Britain in the past 20 years.

The article by Professor Pitkin is, however, deficient in one obvious manner. The most neglected and in many ways the most critical statement of Oakeshottianism is found in his work *Experience and Its Modes,* written in 1933. It is in this work that Oakeshott develops the distinction between the practical and the philosophical modes of thought, experience, and discourse. Conservatism, the doctrine which Professor Pitkin explores, must be understood as emerging from this prior distinction of experience into these modes. It would be most helpful for someone to continue the exploration of Oakeshottianism and to explore it in its earliest statement in this 1933 work.

HOWARD ASTER
Hamilton, Ontario

Editorial Note: Hanna Pitkin is not to be faulted for the absence of a discussion of *Experience and Its Modes.* Such a discussion was present in the original manuscript, but because of the length of the essay (one of the two or three longest we've ever published) we had to suggest that the section be cut. Prof. Pitkin reluctantly but graciously agreed. □

If America ever makes it home, this Newsletter will tell how we got there.

A young insurgent challenges the director of the Steelworkers' largest district. . . . George Meany turns from Nixon neutralist to impeachment activist . . . McGovern activists show staying power in the Democratic Party . . . a program for public energy emerges as a possible way out of our energy crisis . . . the cities resist Peter Brennan's assault on job equality.

The media haven't touched these stories, but Michael Harrington's **Newsletter of the Democratic Left** covers all these movements for social change. There's also continuing discussion of issues including the end of the Cold War, the conservatives' assault on equality, and the relevance of socialism to today's America.

Subscribe Now. 10 issues/year: Student rate $2.50 * Regular Subscription $5 Sustaining Subscription $10 * Foreign Subscription $6 minimum.

Please enter my subscription to the
Newsletter of the Democratic Left, edited by Michael Harrington

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

send to **Newsletter of the Democratic Left,** 31 Union Square West Room 1112
• **From each according to his ability** New York, N.Y. 10003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We Know How Lincoln Feels

But We Are Not Content To Weep

The Ripon Society* has identified the issues of the future, raised questions others would not ask, and proposed practical solutions.

Help us improve the political system and raise your political I.Q. by reading *Jaws of Victory* and subscribing to the *Ripon Quarterly* and *Newsletter*.

The Ripon Society
509 C Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002

The Ripon Quarterly: *Journal of Republican Politics and Policy* contains policy proposals for ideas whose time is yet to come, along with reviews and commentaries to help you build a viable political philosophy for the post-Watergate era.

The **Ripon Forum Newsletter** is a twice-monthly, one-of-a-kind national digest of political developments in all 50 states. The *Forum* offers prescriptive commentary and analysis. For instance, did you know how the Ripon Society's successful suit against the Republican Party will shift the balance of power permanently at Republican Conventions?

Jaws of Victory—the new Ripon Society book, to be published by Little Brown this month. *Jaws of Victory* will tell you:

- The real story between McGovern and Eagleton.
- Why despite Watergate almost every major future campaign will follow the structure of CREEP.
- Why legal donations to the 1972 campaigns are more disturbing than the illegal ones.

John Gardner has said *Jaws of Victory* ..."Is an important and useful book for anyone who wants to keep abreast of contemporary politics."

☐ Yes, I want the special pre-publication offer of *Jaws of Victory* and a copy of the *Ripon FORUM Newsletter* and the *Ripon Quarterly*—all for only $10.95

☐ Yes, I want a trial six month subscription to the *Ripon FORUM Newsletter* and *Ripon Quarterly* for only $7.50.

☐ Enclosed is my check for _____.

☐ Please charge $_____ to my MASTER CHARGE account number.

☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Bank Number ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

_____
Signature

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

*The Ripon Society is a national progressive Republican research and policy organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C. and members throughout the 50 states. Ripon's policy proposals and political analyses have commanded attention and respect and have frequently been adopted as the policy of the Republican Party. As a Chicago *Sun-Times* editorial noted, "They are the voice of the GOP future—clear of thought, strong of word, compassionate of their fellow human beings. And they have the smarts which win elections."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW HARPER TORCHBOOKS

STANISLAV ANDRESKI
Prospects of a Revolution in the U.S.A.

"This is the first book to offer a close analysis of the American social situation . . . . Should have a special appeal to students [and] to specialists in sociology and politics."
—*Smith's Trade News*

CN/291 $1.95

APRIL CARTER
Direct Action and Liberal Democracy

"A reasoned discussion by a social scientist with a clear mind and a warm heart . . . . None the less thorough and perceptive for being very succinct."
—*Times Literary Supplement*

TB/1816 $2.95

RICHARD H. PELLS
Radical Visions and American Dreams
Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years

"It is not only an analysis but also an astute critical assessment of how the intellectuals of the thirties understood and tried to change their world, and what it did to them."
—John Higham

TB/1813 $3.95

COLIN WARD
Anarchy in Action

"He is trying to prove that anarchy is neither a terrible nightmare, nor a beautiful dream, but a form of society which already exists . . . . This is the best general book on the subject written by a British anarchist since the war."
—*New Society*

TB/1834 $2.45

ALEKSANDR I. SOLZHENITSYN
The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956

An Experiment in Literary Investigation
Illustrated P/332 $1.95

For a complete catalog, write
Harper & Row
Paperback Dept
10 E. 53d St., New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED